

The Choice for Personalization as a Campaign Strategy:
A Comparative Study of Parties in Electoral Contexts

Thesis

presented to the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
of the University of Zurich
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Accepted in the spring semester 2016
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Zurich, 2016

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Acknowledgements

At the end of a long journey as was the writing of this dissertation, looking back on the milestones and thanking the people who helped achieve its successful completion is highly in order. I want to express my gratitude to the supportive and stimulating supervision provided by Hanspeter Kriesi and Marco Steenbergen, who not only guided, supported, and encouraged me in times of need, but also let me experience the perks and perils of academic freedom first hand. Research, especially in comparative projects, depends on teamwork. Without the support and diligent work of my research assistants over the years, this endeavor would not have been possible. I am therefore highly grateful for research assistance by Reto Bürgisser, Florian Schaffner, Michael Pinggera, Sergio Röthlisberger and Anna Pestalozzi, I hope you enjoyed our collaboration as much as I did and that you learned something during our time together.

Besides the technicalities of political science research, the process of organizing this dissertation's progress also asked skills in management, cooperation and not least negotiation from me. I would like to thank the team of the "Making Electoral Democracy Work"-project and the Canadian Social Science and Humanities Research Council for providing me with the chance of independent research management as well as funding and a fruitful project environment, especially André Blais, Matt Golder, Indridi Indridasson, Laura Stephenson, Damien Bol and Scott Pruyers.

Outside of the cozy project atmosphere, however, there is a whole scientific community who challenged, but also constantly helped to improve my work with questions and comments. I would like to thank Ruth Beckmann, Thomas Gschwend, Daniel Stegmüller, Kushtrim Veseli, and Edward Weber, as well as countless panelists and discussants at conferences for useful advice and encouragement.

I was very lucky to not only be part of one team of researchers. During my time at the Institute for Political Science at the University of Zurich, I had the opportunity to work for Daniele

Caramani, Simon Bornschier, and Petra Holtrup, who always made me feel welcome in their teams and my contributions appreciated. And what teams these were! To my colleagues and peers at the institute for political science I am indebted for a great atmosphere, lots of fun and coffee, as well as scientific and moral support. Beginning with my office-mates Flavia Fossati, Linda Maduz, Dominic Hoeglenger, and Céline Colombo, my teaching colleagues Simon Maag and Nathalie Giger and my co-representatives of the Mittelbau, Bruno Wüest, Irene Menendez (and the successors Lukas Haffert and Martina Zahno), I would like to thank all my supportive peers and colleagues Pirmin Bundi, Patricia Buser, Lisa Carius-Munz, Thomi De Rocchi, Lineo Devecchi, Nathalie Faoro, Lucia Jardón Martinez, Thomas Kurer, Tabea Palmtag, Livio Raccuia, Ari Ray, Nils Redeker, Raphael Reinke, Tobias Rommel, Saskia Ruth, Tomek Siczek, Judith Spirig, Christine Zollinger and many more.

And above all, I would like to thank my family and my partner Julia for being patient and supportive over all these years, even though it was not always clear when or where this journey would end.

Abstract

The personalization of election campaigns has to date been analyzed mostly in single-country case studies based on modernist macro-approaches. Comparatively, however, personalization not only caters to modern media or works as a replacement for ideological guidance in a complex political world, but also can enhance a candidacy's unique selling point and depends on party professionalization. Thus, this study complements modernization arguments with institutional, competition patterns' and party resources' explanations to parties' general and leadership personalization strategies.

With a new dataset of TV and newspaper advertising in national, regional, and supranational elections of Canada, France, Germany, Spain, and Switzerland, the influence of macro- and partisan factors on the choice for personalization as a campaign strategy was tested comparatively with Bayesian beta-regression models.

Contrary to modernist expectations, mediatization does not systematically explain personalization, yet political complexity does. The strongest predictor is an interaction of presidentialization with a party's choice to run an executive candidate. Electoral systems, competition patterns, professionalization and incumbency show mixed results, whereas populism cannot be empirically linked to more personalization.

Regarding this empirical non-link and personalization's heuristic benefits, normative claims that personalization is harmful for democratic decision making cannot be upheld.

Zusammenfassung

Wahlkampfpersonalisierung wurde bisher mehrheitlich modernisierungstheoretisch in Einzelfallstudien analysiert. Im Vergleich ist sie aber nicht nur auf moderne Medien zurückzuführen und ist auch nicht nur Ersatz für Ideologie im Angesicht politischer Komplexität, sondern theoretisch zudem ein Alleinstellungsmerkmal von Kandidaturen und sie wächst mit Parteiprofessionalisierung.

Diese Studie ergänzt Modernisierungsargumente um institutionelle, Parteienwettbewerbs- und ressourcenbasierte Erklärungen für allgemeine und Führungspersonalisierungsstrategien. Mithilfe neuer Daten aus TV- und Zeitungswerbung wurde der Einfluss von System- und Parteivariablen auf Personalisierung als Wahlkampfstrategie in nationalen, regionalen und supranationalen Wahlen in fünf westlichen Demokratien mithilfe bayesianischer Beta-Regressionen getestet.

Entgegen modernisierungstheoretischer Erwartungen erklärt Mediatisierung Personalisierung nicht systematisch, politische Komplexität jedoch schon. Präsidentialisierung kombiniert mit der Aufstellung eines Exekutivkandidaten hat die grösste Erklärungskraft. Wahlsystem, Parteienwettbewerb, Professionalisierung und Amtsinhaberboni zeigen uneinheitliche Resultate, wohingegen Populismus empirisch nicht zu mehr Personalisierung führt.

Hinsichtlich ebendieses negativen Befundes und des heuristischen Nutzens von Personalisierung können normative Überlegungen, dass Personalisierung der demokratischen Entscheidungsfindung schadet, nicht aufrechterhalten werden.

1. Introduction: The Personalization of Politics

When the CDU campaign team for the German Bundestag election in 2013 unveiled a gigantic 70x20 m billboard showing Angela Merkel's signature gesture, the "Merkelraute", it instantly became big news on all channels. Bare of any political statement, the billboard was seen as the embodiment of the CDU's central campaign strategy, betting entirely on the popularity of their leader. Two years before, also at election time, the Swiss newspapers' paid space was full of sympathetic faces of politicians either promoting their cause, their party, or, in the majority of cases, themselves. The statements in these ads were either ascribed to them or framed as citations, directly addressing the readers and asking for their support. And when the citizens of the European Union were called to decide on their representatives in the elections to the European Parliament in 2014, the two biggest Europarties felt obliged to select their respective Europe-wide frontrunner candidates for the head of the European Commission beforehand, Jean-Claude Juncker for the European People's Party and Martin Schulz for the Party of European Socialists, a novelty in the history of EP elections. Juncker and Schulz held three TV debates and made a great effort to attract attention throughout the campaign. These are only three examples of a development observed with interest but sometimes warily by pundits and scholars alike, a focus on persons instead of parties, policies, or institutions in election campaign messages, called *personalization*. What drives parties, candidates, and, in most of the cases, their campaign managers to use personalization as a strategy? In the following endeavor I plan to contribute to answering this question.

Why should we actually care about the personalization of politics in general and of election campaigns in particular? Answering the second part of the question first, election campaigns are located at the heart of the democratic process. They are the "High Mass of Democracy" (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2013, translation: MB) where parties, candidates, and voters interact in a condensed way and the most elemental and far-reaching democratic political meta-decision,

the vote, is prepared. Therefore campaigns, their effects, and strategies for their successful conduct are gaining a growing amount of attention in the study of elections. Contrary to prior belief and in line with modernization arguments of increasing volatility, “campaigns are viewed as playing a key role for the information processing of the citizens, providing voters with the necessary information for making a choice in line with their preexisting preferences” (Kriesi et al., 2009). Especially for independent voters, who are only weakly or not at all influenced by a long-standing party identification, short-term influences to which voters are exposed during an election campaign make a difference. In Western democracies, the group of independent voters is growing steadily and it is precisely this group that decides which parties are the winners or the losers of an election, as the independents are the most volatile and persuadable group of voters (Vetter & Gabriel, 1998; Schmitt-Beck & Farrell, 2002). One of the most visible short-term factors able to influence voters’ decisions is the personality and image of a candidate. Leadership qualities – be they real or perceived –, competence, or even good looks (Olivola & Todorov, 2010; Verhulst et al., 2010) can systematically influence voting decisions.

And why care about personalization? Pundits and scholars alike also agree on the notion that politics at least since the late 1960s have moved away from ideology to more modern, media-friendly, and flexible driving forces (Mair, 2005; Mancini & Swanson, 1996; Roper et al. 2004). The megatrend of societal modernization and individualization, paired with, and consisting in part of, technological and media development, has been identified by modernization theorists as the main cause of one striking aspect of this process: the personalization of politics (Mancini & Swanson, 1996: 14; Adam & Maier, 2010; Karvonen, 2010). Broadly speaking, this process is defined as directing a larger proportion of political attention towards persons at the expense of parties, institutions, and policies. This personalization plays out in several political domains, like electoral institutions or campaign organization becoming more candidate-centered (Karvonen, 2010), media coverage concentrating on leaders (Kriesi, 2012), and citizens’ electoral decision-making increasingly influenced by party-leader effects (Garzia, 2014; Costa-

Lobo & Curtice 2015). Political campaigns also see their fair share of personalization in organization and content, and explaining variations in level and type of personalization in the content of election campaigns will be the scope of the present research endeavor.

The personalization of election campaign content in particular is widely regarded as a normatively questionable, but inevitable phenomenon of modern societies. Professionalized campaigning and political advertisement via the channels of an increasingly commercialized mass media environment seem to produce a form of political communication and reporting that shifts its focus away from problems, parties, and programs to the political and even private qualities of politicians as persons, allegedly leading to inferior decision-making by voters, who are distracted by personal traits from political standpoints, consequently harming the quality of democracy. Be this true or not, to be able to assess potential effects of personalization on the quality or functioning of democracy, often only implicitly stated by critics, we must first have an idea of where it comes from and what its drivers are to be able to assess its independent effects. The less normatively loaded academic “personalization hypothesis” (Adam & Maier, 2010) or “personalization thesis” (Karvonen, 2010), a widely shared explanatory approach to this phenomenon, is threefold.

First, personalization offers a way to distinguish alternatives in an increasingly cartelized party competition. Mainstream parties struggling to distinguish themselves from their competitors for the median voter can use personalization for enhancing their unique selling point. At the same time, populist challengers to parties’ programmatic linkage with the voters can transport alternative charismatic linkage through the images of leader figures and candidates.

Second, an increasingly commercialized media environment disproportionally advantages news-worthily presented political information, including personalization as a quality criterion. The political actors, who are able to deliver their message in a personalized, for example human interest, context, receive more attention than the ones concentrating on complex and deliberate political issue statements. Parties and candidates who want to be electorally successful

strategically anticipate this fact and adapt their campaigns accordingly. This mechanism is especially visible in the coverage of party or executive leaders. Closely interacting with the modernization of the media environment, especially two political-institutional developments, nationalization and presidentialization, make the person behind the ideas and political positions he or she should decide on or implement more interesting than the content, sometimes even outside of the function as an office-holder (Wheeler, 2013: 87–88). First, the nationalization of politics (Caramani, 2004: 205–206), a development which in turn is also fostered by the distribution of political news via mass media, circumvents interactive direct personal contacts between local voters and candidates or party rank-and-file and replaces it by rather one-sided mediatized exposure of citizens to the party leadership, creating a mediatized party image closely linked with its leading personnel. Second, the presidentialization of politics (Poguntke & Webb, 2005), a shift in power towards the executive branch and especially to the head of the executive, is observed in many established democracies, even of the parliamentary kind. Both globalization, where chief executives get leverage from their position in “two-level games” (Putnam, 1988) in a growing number of international negotiations, and modernization, leading to state growth and consequently to bureaucratic complexity hard to control by the legislative branch, combined with a decline in traditional cleavage politics, facilitate autonomous decision-making by said chief executives. These power resources result in disproportionate voter and media attention for leaders, on which campaign strategists try to capitalize by personalizing campaign content.

Third, personalization is seen as an informational shortcut for citizens to reduce information costs associated with the decision on which party or candidate to vote for, a task becoming increasingly difficult in a complex modern world of fading ideological guidance. The added value of structured information candidates as “attractively packaged commodities” (Dalton & Wattenberg, 1993: 208) provide can guide and enhance as well as replace ideological considerations in the voters’ decision-making process.

In addition to these modernist explanatory factors, electoral institutions fostering candidate-centered campaigning like single-member districts or open lists, the institutional setup of political systems like presidentialism or federalism as well as electoral by-laws and institutions like the establishment of TV debates have to be taken into account to be able to draw a complete picture of what drives personalization in campaigns' content.

The three explanatory factors mentioned first – cartelized party competition, media developments, and the need for informational shortcuts – have in common that they are postulating aspects of modernization as causing personalization. Modernization is theorized as inevitable and steadily growing or gaining importance in all established democracies, creating the notion of a development or unstoppable trend towards personalization rather than fluctuation or variation (Adam & Maier, 2010: 216). Since these factors play out in a stable institutional framework, the common perception is that inter-country variations regarding this phenomenon in western democracies, associated with an allegedly inevitable development of party cartelization, media modernization and commercialization, and increasing complexity of the political world and the world as a whole, is just due to different stages in a steady process which a country has reached. But the empirical evidence of an overarching and steadily modernizing tendency towards personalization is still missing. Evidence for a time dimension, may it be caused by a changing media environment or increasing complexity of political decisions, has at best been mixed in political personalization research (Adam & Maier, 2010; Karvonen, 2010), as this research literature has to date mainly been produced in single-country or even single-election case studies. Even a considerable proportion of longitudinal studies of the personalization of politics in media, voting behavior as well as election campaigning (for a summary, see Karvonen, 2010: 7–9 , 11–13, 96–99) could not identify a general linear increase in personalization over countries and time. This is partly due to the fact that these studies stressed a specially selected set of factors influencing personalization, which are more or less obviously tied to modernization, but could or did not take variance in other factors like

institutions, resources, and competition into account (exception: Kriesi, 2012). Especially the competition patterns of parties in an election campaign are just beginning to be studied in a comparative manner with regard to personalization. Furthermore, many studies of personalization take an exclusively macroscopic perspective on personalization of a political system or campaign, whereas meso-level factors like party qualities that are providing incentives for personalization in election campaigns are neglected. A macroscopic perspective cannot account for intra-country, for example inter-election or inter-party, variance in personalization of electoral campaigns. Looking at intra-election variance between candidates and parties allows us to get a better understanding of driving mechanisms behind the choice for or against personalized campaigning beyond the influence of the modernity of the context. So an approach differentiating variation in contexts as well as party qualities appears more promising than assuming a universal time dimension to personalization, which still remains short on empirical evidence.

So to answer the question “what exactly drives the personalization of politics in general and of election campaigns in particular”, context factors like specific institutions, party constellations, and qualities of different parties and candidates must be taken into account simultaneously with aspects of modernization when we want to explain why parties choose personalization strategies. In this research project, I will contribute to explaining the choice for personalized campaign strategies by taking modernization arguments seriously, but complement them with the important explanatory contributions that a comparative analysis of institutions, party competition patterns, and eventually party and candidate qualities make. This approach adds to the body of literature comparing country case studies (Karvonen, 2010; Swanson & Mancini, 1996; Adam & Maier, 2010) and will tackle the question of personalization in a comparative and eclectic framework. This approach takes one step away from the implicit assumption made by modernization scholars that personalization is following a trend, and one step towards a

comparativist notion that takes into account cultural, institutional, and historical idiosyncrasies not as anomalies, but measurable variation.

1.1 Personalization as a Campaign Strategy

Unfortunately, the concept of “personalization of politics” has been notoriously plagued by semantic imprecision and lack of analytical clarity (van Aelst et al., 2012: 204). In political communication research, the term personalization has been used to describe and analyze a broad and often empirically coinciding bundle of phenomena.

“On the one hand, personalization refers to a stronger focus on candidates/politicians instead of parties, institutions or issues. On the other hand, the personalization hypothesis claims that it is not only individuals per se, but it is their personal, non-political characteristics that become more relevant.” (Adam & Maier, 2010: 216)

To ensure comparability with the literature as well as to contribute to an establishing standard of analytical classification of personalization, I will define this study’s main object “personalization of election campaigns” in the following and place it in an analytic framework related to van Aelst et al.’s (2012) classification of personalization of media coverage.

Political personalization, as scholars have indicated since the adaption of this term in political science research, is a broad concept including more than one type and dimension (Rahat & Sheafer, 2007; Adam & Maier, 2010; van Aelst et al., 2012). So clarifying the scope and aim of the definition of personalization employed here is in order. Rahat and Sheafer (2007) identified three domains in which personalization and its effects are most relevant for political research: institutions, the media, and behavior, where they differentiate between behavior of politicians and the public. My contribution aims to explain the personalization of politicians’

behavior, especially their strategic behavior in election campaigns¹. I will answer the question which parties' campaign management will under what circumstances resort to which relative amount of personalization in their campaign messages. The other types of personalization mentioned by Rahat and Sheafer (2007) – institutional, media-related, and the public's behavior personalization – play a key role as mechanisms motivating campaign managers to apply personalization and therefore in explaining campaign personalization, but will not be included as outcomes in this analysis. Of course, institutional personalization, referring to changes in rules and mechanisms enhancing individual politicians' importance, such as adoption of open-list electoral systems or single-member districts (Zittel, 2015: 13; Shugart et al., 2005), clearly influences the incentive structure favorably for personalized campaigning. Also media personalization, for example an increase in media coverage of individual politicians compared to parties or policies, contributes to the use of personalized campaign content. Anticipating increased media attention for personalized information, spin doctors in party offices are eager to take advantage of this free augmentation of their message. And of course influencing the public's personalized political behavior, especially voting behavior, is the main goal of personalized campaign strategies (Garzia, 2014). All these types of personalization are empirically tightly intertwined phenomena, whose relationship with each other I will theorize in this thesis. But the focus of the analysis lies in the personalization of political communication by political actors, namely parties in election campaigns.

In the political communication literature, on whose conceptualization of personalization I will base my definition, personalization is broadly defined as the increase of media attention and coverage of persons compared to other (collective) actors or issues. In the political domain,

¹ By marketing scholars "personalized" is understood as "tailor made for the individual customer". Although the development of communication technology, especially but not only the internet, social networks, and consequently "big data" enabled party strategists to microtarget advertising messages to an ever smaller and more specific audience, which for example was decisive in the election of Barack Obama (Kenski et al. 2010), this notion of personalization will not be the objective of the present study.

these non-personal actors and issues would then be institutions, parties, collective actors of civil society as well as political problems, ideologies, or policies. Borrowing from this empirical concept of media personalization, I define the amount of personalization in a campaign as the proportion of campaign communication that concentrates on persons vs. parties, issues, and institutions. The more campaign content features persons as actors, objects, or messengers, the more personalized the campaign. However, my research deals with personalization not as an empirical feature of the media system or a mere pattern in election campaign coverage. The choice for personalized campaign strategies has an agency component to it which has to be included in the working definition of personalization employed here. So to answer the present research question of how one can explain the choice for personalization as a campaign strategy, I define personalization as the *conscious choice* of party officials, campaign managers, and candidates to advertise *persons* and their qualities, aiming at electoral *gains*. So in addition to measuring the mere proportion of personalized information transmitted, I will theorize the process that leads to the decision for personalization to be driven by a certain notion of utility. After this first step of defining the object under investigation and clarifying its scope, there is still the need to differentiate between two dimensions of personalization: *individualization* vs. *privatization* and *concentrated* or *leadership* personalization vs. *general* personalization. The bulk of research about personalization of politics deals with the question to what extent media coverage is personalized. In this context, different dimensions of personalization have already been defined and categorized to enhance conceptual clarity. Because I already based the definition of personalization employed here on media scholars' contributions, I will also draw on the classifying concepts developed in this strand of research (Adam & Maier, 2010; van Aelst et al., 2012) to frame this research project's object and scope.

On the first dimension, two elementary forms of personalization are distinguished in the literature: Personalization as a shift of focus from parties and institutions to politicians, labeled *individualization* (van Aelst et al., 2012, 206), and a focus shift from the political to the personal

life of candidates, labeled *privatization* (van Aelst et al., 2012: 207). I will first concentrate my analysis on the individualization aspect of personalization, the proportion of candidates' appearances compared to issues and parties. For example, a TV ad showing a politician making a statement is considered more individualized than a TV ad in which a voiceover suggests a party's policy proposal remedies a depicted problem. A quantitative assessment of how personalized the content of several election campaigns is, compared to (or also in conjunction with) party and policy, and the reason behind that will be the first endeavor of this project. There is also an internal differentiation of this concept in order, constituting the second dimension of analysis. Individualization can come in two forms, a focus on leaders, *concentrated individualization*, or a focus on persons/candidates in general and regardless of rank, *general individualization* (van Aelst et al., 2012: 207). These two subtypes of personalization follow different logics and serve different purposes when it comes to election campaigning, so I will consider the effects of modernization, institutions, party competition and party as well as candidate qualities on these types of personalization in separate analyses.

The second part will be dealing with privatization of election campaigns, primarily concerned with the amount of mentioning traits of candidates compared to genuine political qualities like ideological stance or policies. Some scholars following Lass (1995: 60) advocate a further dimension of personalization differentiating between personal traits relevant, like leadership qualities, and irrelevant, like hobbies, for political purposes, but this distinction is argumentatively hard to hold up, especially in election campaigns. Candidates and their images as "attractively packaged commodities" (Dalton & Wattenberg, 1993: 208) are hard to separate from each other. If a voter does not see a candidate as a replaceable party soldier, perceives him or her as a person potentially representing his or her interests in parliament, it is not justifiable to qualify the voters' attention paid for example to the candidate's way of life, character traits, or other personal information as apolitical. Following Pitkin's (1967) concept of descriptive representation, all kinds of personality traits or demographics of a candidate can have an impact

on his or her perceived and actual suitability for a mandate or government office and there is no reason to treat indications of these traits differently if they are framed in a public or private personalized context. In addition to this argument, personal traits of candidates can also be used by voters as heuristic shortcuts to reduce information costs for making a rational decision. Therefore, my analysis will include traits of candidates as indicators of personalization as privatization, regardless of whether “role-near” or “role-distant” (Lass, 1995: 60).

	individualization	privatization
general personalization	concentration on candidates instead of institutions, parties, and policies (e.g. ads showing candidates' faces)	concentration on candidates' traits (e.g. display of a politician's hobbies)
leadership personalization	concentration on leaders instead of institutions, parties, and policies (e.g. ads showing leaders)	concentration on leaders' traits (e.g. showing leader with family)

Figure 1.1 Dimensions of campaign personalization

Figure 1.1 summarizes the four types of campaign personalization under investigation here and gives short examples. After this neutral conceptualization and description, however, some words about the (often implicit) normative assumptions and evaluations of personalization in election campaigns are in order.

1.2 Normative Evaluations and Implications of Campaign Personalization

The personalization of politics in general has been theorized as a symptom of, a consequence of, but also a remedy for the crisis of modern democratic representation. On the one hand critics of personalization claim that it is responsible for the success of populist challengers to representative democracy (Pasquino, 2008). These challengers would receive disproportionate attention towards their charismatic leadership based on stylizing themselves as personification of the *volonté générale* or “man of the people”, hollowing even further the institutions and

functioning of representative democracy (Kriesi, 2014; Mair, 2013). Also, personalization is accused of unduly replacing “real” political information and thereby contributing to a lack of political sophistication and information in the population, which causes an “erosion of the public sphere” (Langer, 2007). Personalization here is said to further push back genuine political information about ideology and policy needed to deliberate and make adequate collective decisions to hold elites accountable. The already small amount of attention paid to politics by citizens should not be spoiled.

On the other hand, both these critiques rely on strong assumptions. Personalization as populism’s accomplice can only be normatively relevant if populism is defined as inferior to other forms of political representation or as by itself harmful to democracy. Theorists of populism have largely emancipated themselves from this normative assumption (Canovan, 1999). Furthermore, even if one accepted populism’s inferiority in collective decision-making or harmfulness for democracy, personalization’s (empirically sound) link with populism is theoretically not as clear as assumed by the critics. Populism can be conceptualized either as an ideology, or as a political strategy (Kriesi, 2015; Urbinati, 2014). Its main ideological components, postulating an antagonism between “the pure people” and a “corrupt elite” (Canovan, 1999; Mudde, 2004) and the necessity for unmediated execution of the people’s will (a notion that can be considered illiberal, but not undemocratic, rather very or overly democratic), however, only constitute a “thin ideology” (Stanley, 2008) unable to serve as an encompassing framework for responding to problems in all domains of life. It has to be combined with thicker ideologies like nationalism or socialism able to define for example who belongs to “the people” and who its enemies are. Therefore, the undemocratic exclusionary tendencies towards foreigners or “the rich” are not necessarily the fault of populism, but of the ideologies combined with it. And within these normatively questionable and questioned ideologies, personalization does not even appear, because it mainly plays its role in populism as a political strategy. Ideologically, there is no immediate need for a leader figure, but

strategically, a personalistic leader as an unmediated executor of “the people’s will” is a feature most populist movements (or parties) share to gain support for their policy projects (Weyland, 2001). Populism in this analysis is understood as a political strategy, of which personalization as concentration on a leader figure is a crucial part. But the chicken-or-egg problem of whether personalization facilitates populism, as some media scholars argue (e.g. Mazzoleni, 2008), or whether populism drives personalization, remains unsolved.

The argument made by alleged defenders of the public sphere is even harder to uphold (Adam & Maier, 2010: 220-223). It relies on the assumption that there is “real” and “fake” political information, which is hard to justify when thought through. Distinguishing useful or harmful political information is just as hard as separating role-near or role-distant traits of politicians. Every piece of information shapes the individual’s perspective on politics and therefore should not be dismissed a priori. Reevaluating this normative categorization of personalization as harmful pseudo-information makes way for the realization that it can even contribute to a remedy of a crisis of participation and therefore democracy. In fact, personalization can contribute to alleviating crises of the public sphere, both as “the spoonful of sugar that makes the medicine go down” as well as a way to ensure descriptive representation should substantive representation continue to be dysfunctional. In making political information and competition more entertaining, accessible, and therefore salient to citizens (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987), also those disaffected with democracy or not willing and/or able to engage in political deliberation, personalization can on the one hand help alleviate the ever growing inequality in political effectiveness and efficacy predicted by scholars of political participation (e.g. Brady et al., 1995) and promote political engagement via popular politicians’ “star power” (Wheeler, 2013: 170). On the other hand, it can also function as a heuristic shortcut alleviating information costs for all citizens, whether willing or unwilling to invest cognitive resources into politics. Personalization thereby helps make political decisions more accurate in facilitating the ordering, processing, and evaluating of information in a way the human mind is used to:

Evaluating persons (Hoffmann & Raupp, 2006: 459). Estimating a person's belonging, qualities, and intentions is an everyday task for which the human mind is very adequately trained. Complex political information however, especially when concentrated in election campaigns, overwhelms the human mind regardless of individual capability. Personalization makes this information more accessible and contributes to economic decision-making under bounded rationality. So an individual or voter should not be deemed lazy or underinformed when opting for the informational shortcut personalization offers, but economically rational, making the best of his or her resources. In addition, personal traits can function as carriers of descriptive representation (Pitkin, 1967). Likeness in sociodemographics can be a valid cue for likeness or agreement in issue orientation, though mediatized spin and image management, giving a desired more than an actual picture, as well as societal individualization, making likeness on the growing number of relevant traits improbable, undermine this personalized cue's value.

Thus, it would be premature to reject personalization on normative grounds as a threat to democracy. Its potential usefulness for democratic decision-making depends clearly on its relationship with other forms of political information. As mentioned in the introduction, to be able to assess potential effects of personalization on the quality or functioning of democracy, we must first have an idea of where it comes from, what its drivers are, and who uses it under which circumstances.

1.3 Overview of the Thesis

To get a clearer picture of personalization as a campaign strategy, I will theorize its drivers and constraints in the next chapter. In chapter 3, the study's design, case selection, operationalization, and method of analysis will be presented and justified, followed by an overview of the dependent variable's distributions in chapter 4. Chapter 5 will deal with explaining general individualization, the most overarching type of personalization, candidates'

visibility in newspaper ads and TV spots. A theoretically as well as practically highly relevant subset of candidates, namely leaders and individualization concentrated on them, will be the subject of chapter 6. In chapter 7, I will turn towards the privatization dimension of personalization, explaining when and why candidates' traits are portrayed strategically in campaign advertisements. In chapter 8, I will pay special attention to privatization concentrated on leadership, before I conclude with a summary and evaluation of the results in light of the normative claims surrounding personalization in political communication in chapter 9.

2. Drivers and Constraints of Personalization in Election Campaigns

Personalization of campaign content is a result of several correlated and intertwined phenomena in party competition and organization, media environment, and electoral institutions. In this chapter, I will theorize the main drivers behind the personalization of election campaigns. First, I will theorize and explain modernization's influence on parties' campaign communication in the crisis of programmatic representation. Over the last decade, party competition has lost a considerable amount of programmatic political content. The big ideologies like socialism, liberalism, or political Catholicism, which structured the party systems of the interwar period in the western world (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967) and stayed influential beyond (Bartolini & Mair, 2007) have lost a considerable amount of their appeal and therefore their structuring power in the process of modernization. They have been partly complemented and partly replaced by alternative linkage strategies of parties, namely technocratic valence appeal, issue voting, economic voting, and not least populism and charismatic linkage, both conducive to personalized election campaigning.

Second, mediatization of politics in general and political communication in particular contributes to an increase in personalization of political campaigns. With the advent and later the pervasion of mass communication in the mediation of political information, political actors have been adapting to a "media logic" (Esser, 2013) of news value at the expense of the political logic that governed political coverage and mediation before.

Thirdly, related to the decline in programmatic linkage as well as mediatization, also the increasing complexity of the political arena makes personalization as a form of heuristics attractive for voters to be able to orientate themselves in a complex political world.

However, all these facets of modernization play out in specific institutional contexts. Electoral systems with small districts or open lists, concentrated executive power, centralization vs. federalism as well as the institutionalization of TV debates and the development and regulation

of personalization-friendly campaigning techniques shape the incentives for a higher or lower level of personalization.

After theorizing these four groups of macro-drivers of personalization below and the mechanisms through which their influence on party strategists operates, I will conclude this chapter by deriving testable hypotheses on different levels of analysis, taking the institutional framework, the mediatization of the political system as well as the party organizations, parties' positions in the programmatic electoral competition as well as the perceived complexity of politics by voters into account.

2.1 Personalization and the Crisis of Representation

The personalization of politics has been repeatedly linked to a crisis of representation. It allegedly shows, deepens, but in some circumstances also alleviates problems that stem from a decline in programmatic linkage between parties and voters. The representative connection of parties with their voters is deemed indispensable for functioning party government as we observe it in the western world (Poguntke, 2000; Mair, 2013). This ideally stable connection, known in the political science literature as linkage, describes the interchange and communication between parties and their followers vital for organizing modern mass societies along partisan lines to provide representative, responsive as well as responsible government. Three types of linkage have been theorized to connect party elites with their followers: clientelist linkage, programmatic linkage, and charismatic linkage (Kitschelt, 2000). All three of these linkage mechanisms have been present in different mixing ratios throughout democratic history. Charismatic linkage is most conducive to personalization. Based on a leadership person's personal traits (=charisma), this sort of linkage continues a straight line from the divine right and absolute power of the pre-democratic monarchs, via the elite parties of the 19th century, to popular celebrity leaders of mediatized democracy nowadays. Charismatic linkage therefore embodies a continuing tradition of personalized claims to power, which are based on

a leader's traits, not convictions or ideology. Clientelist linkage is based on direct exchange of private goods for electoral and political support, more often than not at least bordering corruption². Programmatic linkage, based on ideology and policy proposals for the whole of society deduced from this set of ideas, is seen as a more democratically mature way of linking parties and followers. But this type of linkage has come under siege in the process of societal modernization. A rapid growth of the middle class, diversifications in occupation as well as worldviews and values, and new challenges resulting from globalization have made it harder to organize representative government along established party and cleavage lines (Kriesi, 2013, Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000).

In this development, not only voters, but also parties transformed away from the class-based "mass parties" dominant in the political arenas of the 1920s to 1960s (Poguntke, 2000). First, their more narrow ideological appeal designed to cater to a specific "classe gardée" was replaced by a strategic centrist and more overarching repositioning in the context of forming catch-all parties (Kirchheimer, 1966) beginning in the 1960s. Subsequently, the development of these parties into "cartel parties" (Katz & Mair, 1995) further loosened the programmatic linkage of parties with voters in favor of a closer connection of parties with the state. This process not only affected the relationship between party leaderships and their partisans, but also the competition patterns in the political arena as a whole. The necessity to cater to a diffuse "center" of political competition caused established parties to shift their programmatic stance further and further to the middle of the ideological spectrum, not only leading to the dilution of their individual policy offers to the voters, but also, since the vast majority of established parties converged to the middle, to a competition where viable political alternatives became more and more alike, generating a party cartel of consensus. A tendency to depoliticize controversial

² Clientelist practices are in a great majority of cases not suitable for organizing national mass politics, as they are interpersonally based and have unlimited potential to be publically scandalized by political opponents, a big price to pay for uncertain political gains, should the interpersonal relationship in a mass society be difficult to hold up.

issues by invoking technocratic commissions also did not alleviate the problems of cartelized party competition (Mair, 2013).

To add to programmatic leadership's dysfunctionality, even the ideological space as an arena of party competition is not guaranteed to be perceived to be the same by every voter. With the rise of issue voting, replacing or complementing the choice for or against ideological packages, programmatic linkage is further weakened by thematic fragmentation (Green-Pedersen, 2007). The salient issue of the day (i.e. in the weeks before Election Day) can become a decisive factor (Lachat, 2014) but ownership of these issues shortly relevant to voters provides a more unstable form of party-voter linkage contrary to established ideological positioning. And for an even greater group of voters "it's the economy, stupid", motivating them to reward or punish the sitting government most consistently on egotropic (Fiorina, 1981) or sociotropic (Kinder & Kiewiet, 1981) evaluations of the economic situation on election day, leading to even more instability in ideological linkage as the mixture of generalized clientelism and economic single-issueness that is economic voting gains in importance.

The consequences are paradoxical but clearly visible: Identification of voters with established parties declined steadily in a process of dealignment (Dalton, 2000), consequently voter volatility increased, yet still alternation in government is largely taking place between established parties of the center without challengers having sustainable chances to participate in government and enact alternative policy options. All in all, party competition has become increasingly dysfunctional and showing a pattern of cartelization.

This creates severe problems for parties' legitimacy as main players in organizing government. Their function as organizers of democratic political competition vitally depends on credibly providing alternatives, responsiveness, and responsibility. So to secure ongoing support without delegitimizing themselves, especially centrist mainstream parties can resort to showcase competition on a dimension besides policy. One viable alternative dimension is the personality, popularity, or charisma of leaders and candidates. Personal information on leaders and

candidates (be it role-near or role-distant, see Adam & Maier, 2010) is easily accessible and provides, from a political marketing perspective, a unique selling point for parties competing for voter support. Even if the parties largely agree on policies, replacing or enhancing their political message with personal characteristics of candidates creates visible differences between them and an illusion of competition, even when substantive differences are small. So even though party competition is cartelized, and the voters actually prefer cooperation of party elites over tough bargaining and the cumbersome process of finding compromises³, there is still a desire for at least holding up the façade of competition at election time, which can be provided by personalization. This “spectacle, image and theatre” (Mair, 2013: 83) of competition is particularly useful in mediatized environments, as we will see in the next section.

In addition, if citizens face this development towards the decline of a vital part of the democratic process – programmatic linkage – they become increasingly disaffected with parties and their role in organizing democracy. Democratic government as party government gets hollowed out, leaving a “void” (Mair, 2013) for other forms of linkage to fill. Technocratic and populist challengers with a clearer policy stance defined by an a priori notion of the *volonté générale* are offered a chance to gain access to parliamentary seats and even government portfolios. On the one hand, technocratic challengers to representative government or even actors affiliated with the established parties stress their capacity for responsible government allegedly not provided by the party cartel, which supposedly only aims for short-term electoral gains. They try to expand depoliticized party competition to an additional valence dimension (Stokes, 1963, 1992; Clark, 2009), aiming for electoral gains by advertising and displaying their competence, integrity, and (especially in the case of incumbents) reputation for getting things done. Populists on the other hand rely on charismatic linkage provided by leadership figures and a strategy of

³ In Germany for example, averaging popularity scores over 18 years, the grand coalition of the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats has been the most preferred coalition alternative (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen 2015).

stylizing them as embodiments of the “people’s will” claiming to fix the lost responsiveness of the political system, be it alleged or substantial (Caramani, forthcoming). “[C]harismatic leadership and direct communication between the leader and ‘the people’ are common among populists [and] *facilitate* [...] populism” (Mudde, 2004: 545, emphasis original), even more than populist party programs’ or subordinate candidates’ appeal (Kestilä-Kekkonen & Söderlund, 2014). Personalization thus is often observed when challengers from outside the established and cartelized channels of representation try to make their claims heard, but also the established parties can resort to the strategic use of populist discourses or arguments when challenged. Especially populist qualities can credibly be transported by emphasizing the individual qualities of these challengers’ political personnel versus the alleged loss of touch with the common man attributed to candidates brought forward by established mainstream parties. Management qualities and integrity as well as charismatic embodiment of the people’s will in a leader or candidate therefore makes personalization a suitable vehicle for these challenges to representative party democracy and allow challenger parties as well as defenders to use their personnel’s qualities for their electoral advantage.

So from a linkage perspective, personalized election campaigns can reach voters via two mechanisms. First, in addition to the dysfunctional ideological dimension, personalization provides a type of political competition of alternatives that is no longer guaranteed by mainstream cartelized parties due to ideological and programmatic convergence. Second, personalization emphasizes and provides charismatic and personalized linkage for challenger parties, especially of the populist kind, as another, “real” alternative for voters disaffected with the dominant party cartel.

2.2 Personalization and Mediatization

The personalization of political communication in general and of election campaign content in particular results not only from changes in party competition and linkage to the voters, but to a

large extent as well from a change in the relationship between politics and the media. Since the advent of mass communication, scholars of media systems as well as mass media channels like commercial press, TV, and the internet have observed mass media growing more and more important to ultimately be the monopolist in bringing political information to the voters (Strömbäck & Esser, 2014), a job that was previously, in the age of mass parties, also performed by parties and their satellite organizations, oftentimes assisted by partisan media outlets (Blumler & Kavanagh, 1999). Especially the advent and ubiquity of television has been identified as a driving factor in this process. Nowadays, citizens have a plethora of outlets to choose their political information from, which however are similar in one aspect: They follow a non-partisan media logic of news value, a need for commercial appeal, and professional distance to politics, resulting in a more active role in shaping political communication, not only passively transporting information (or linkage). In the course of professionalizing and commercializing, journalists changed their role from “silent sceptics” to “vocal cynics” (Patterson, 1993), so that the media increasingly influences society and politics as an actor in its own right in this process of *mediatization*. Political information that does not fit the media logic and its criteria for newsworthiness does not get reported and so parties and political actors in general have to provide content which is deemed reportable to be recognized as a viable alternative in the electoral arena. Thus, this development alters the rules of the political communication game; it gets mediatized (Esser & Strömbäck, 2014).

Definitions of mediatization oscillate between an overarching “metaprocess” (Krotz, 2007: 22) and a more relational approach. In the former approach, media and its distinct logic are argued to have penetrated, taken over, and made nearly all of society’s subsystems, including politics (Mazzoleni, 2014), dependent on their logic (Hjarvard, 2013: 17). The more relational approach to mediatization postulates a change in the transmission of information in interplay with other societal domains like politics (Strömbäck & Esser, 2014; Donges, 2008), but also fostering “the institutionalization of media logic in other societal subsystems [, influencing] the actions of

individuals” (Schrott, 2009: 42). Both these approaches share the notion that a particular “media logic” is spreading in modern societies and their subsystems, causing actors with the need for communication, here politicians and parties, to adapt to this logic and cater to the interests of the media to increase the salience of their message. There are different components to media logic, developed in the process of modernization of mass media, namely professionalism, commercialism, and media technology (Strömbäck & Esser, 2014). Media professionalism is defined by Strömbäck and Esser (2014: 17–18) as independence from other societal subsystems (especially politics), a pursuit of generally accepted norms and values of journalism, and a claim to serve the public interest. Again, these factors are thoroughly intertwined, but the common notion of norms and values of newsworthiness are especially conducive to personalization. Already in their classical analysis of what constitutes news value, Galtung and Ruge (1965: 68–69) defined personalization (or personification, as they called it) as one important criterion making a piece of information “news”⁴, and even as later scholars revisited their criteria catalogue, personalization and its related news-value factors like picture opportunities gained even more prominence (Harcup & O’Neill, 2001).

Also media commercialism, the modern notion that media outlets have to function as businesses, contributes to personalization. News about people, their deeds, opinions, and flaws are generally cheaper to produce than investigative in-depth coverage of scandals or political processes. For example, an interview or just a soundbite are easy to come by, whereas uncovering and interpreting classified documents needs time and resources. This tendency is reinforced by the fact that public personalities like politicians, who want to use the media to bring messages across to the voter for them, or even better: who want to publicly attack a

⁴ Following Galtung and Ruge (1965: 68–67) personalization in its own right (be it about elites or common people) makes information newsworthy, but also being a consequence of other factors such as cultural idealism of human free will, identification, elite concentration, frequency, and not to forget: picture opportunity (Harcup & O’Neill, 2001).

competitor, will readily provide content, from which news outlets only have to pick the best-fitting parts, leading to a form of media complicity, especially with populist leaders (Mazzoleni, 2008). Coming back to the example above, no politician planning to stay in office will as readily provide information for investigating secretive government activities as he or she will provide a personal statement. Also, the commercial need for infotainment to appeal to a wide audience is conveniently satisfied by personalization. Horse-race coverage of campaigns concentrating on leading candidates (Patterson, 1993), private stories of candidates, and other personalized content is very suitable for media, gets reported, and thus is also readily provided by campaign organizers, one type of crucial player of the political communication game in a mediatized political arena.

However, not only the game is changing. The players, here collective political actors like parties (Donges, 2008), parliamentary groups, party boards, or campaign organizations, also change with regard to the media logic of modern political communication and campaigning, they “self-mediatize” (Esser, 2013). This process is also part of a profound modernization and professionalization in political communication, but here on the part of parties instead of media outlets (Gibson & Römmele, 2009; Mancini & Swanson, 1996, Panebianco, 1988). More precisely, parties mediatize their organization (Donges, 2008). They adapt their organizational structure, profile, and actions, be it intentionally or non-intentionally (Panebianco, 1988), to the prevailing media logic in order to be fit for spreading their message through said media. During this process, parties install and keep up a professional standing unit for press liaisons in the respective organization, allocate resources to external spin doctors and advertising agencies, and increase their communication output in quantity as well as by channel diversification (Donges, 2008: ch.8). These organizational and behavioral changes then enable political actors to cater efficiently to the needs of media to make their voices heard. The organizations now have the capacities to adapt messages to the media logic in the political arena, including

personalizing campaign content with the aim of making it more newsworthy and media-friendly.

Thus mediatization fosters personalization of campaign content on two intertwined levels. On the systemic macro-level of the political arena, the level of influence exerted by media logic compared to political logic can be a predictor of the personalization of campaign communication in general. Personalized content is more salient to the media and promises disproportionate attention, which is of key importance to a successful campaign. On the party level, the more self-mediatized a party organization has become, the more one can expect it to personalize its campaign to reap the benefits of the aforementioned media salience.

2.3 Personalization and Psychology

Personal characteristics of politicians have long been regarded as influential for voters' cognitive decision-making. In the classical Michigan model (Campbell et al., 1960), candidate effects (although mediated by party identification) are one major building block in explaining voters' choice, which even gained in importance in subsequent revisions and expansions as well as critiques of this approach (Garzia, 2014: 18–22). Political personalization's appeal as a campaign strategy therefore also stems from psychological factors, emotional as well as rational, related to voters' decision-making (Lavine et al., 1998). Its emotional component contributes *inter alia* to affective personalized charismatic linkage, because it provides a sense of belonging and likeness between candidates and voters. Social groups and parties are less and less able to offer this kind of connection to atomized voters, whose social and political group ties grow less and less meaningful for their political identity and choice.

The alleged increase in influence of personality factors on voting decisions, and therefore its usefulness as a campaign strategy (van Zoonen & Holtz-Bacha, 2000), can be related to the decline of ideological linkage mentioned above (Garzia, 2014) and an increase in individualization of political thinking as well as belonging. Paralleling the political

homelessness because the voter cannot find a rationally fitting programmatic appeal of parties anymore, he consequently also does not emotionally connect to a party. Voters are more and more volatile in behavior as well as identification (Dalton, 2000), not only due to a lack of ideological guidance, but also because they miss a sense of belonging. In addition, seeing oneself as an individual and thus identifying with an individual is more relevant for political choice today than in the past (Caprara, 2007: 161).

This emotional void described above can be filled by “political personae” (Corner, 2000), the self-stylization of politicians in mediated (see above) discourses and campaigns. The (self-) presentation of candidates and their personality traits can compensate for the loss in programmatic and group appeal of parties in offering “a kind of similarity heuristic, conducive to liking those perceived similar, and thus supplying the emotional glue that is needed to cement preferences” (Caprara, 2007: 158), a notion that can also be found in the tradition of Pitkin’s “descriptive representation” (1967).

But personalization’s and the political persona’s psychological appeal goes beyond the affective domain. It also provides rational heuristics for voters confronted with an overwhelming amount of political information (especially concentrated in election campaigns), which they are not willing or able to process economically. Abundant political information that saturated voters are confronted with can be more easily organized and processed with candidates as an anchor and guiding post. Humans are bound by cognitive limitations (Simon, 1985; Zaller, 1992), but they can use personalization as an informational shortcut to process, order, and make sense of abundant, unclear, and, more often than not, conflicting information about parties, platforms, and policy alternatives (Caprara et al., 2008). The merits of personalization for voters therefore lie in breaking down the complex task of deliberative political decision-making to an easier cognitive task with which the human mind is more familiar: Recognizing and judging persons. Judging people is a task the human brain is doing automatically without much effort (Hoffmann & Raupp, 2006), whereas deliberating and deciding on policy issues for example is cognitively

more demanding, because it requires concentrated attention rather than intuitive judgement (Evans, 2008). Campaign managers are eager to offer these heuristics to voters in times of election campaigns in the hope that personalized information is more likely to be reported (see mediatization) *as well as* to stick and mobilize or persuade potential voters.

Both these factors are assets too convenient for party strategists not to be used in campaigns: Replacing party and group identification with a more individualized appeal of political personae as well as the heuristic usefulness of personalization both make political campaign content more accessible for voters and should therefore be used whenever promising electoral gains.

2.4 Personalization and Institutions

As encompassing and influential as post-war societal modernization changes have been in the western world, they still took place in a relatively stable institutional framework of electoral rules and regulations. Voter dealignment and realignment, individualization and increased volatility, media commercialization, and professionalization all took place in political systems where changes over time in formal institutions like from presidentialism to parliamentarism, or in the electoral system, or of electoral by-laws were scarce. Yet variance existed and exists between countries and levels of government along with elections to different representative bodies, for example upper and lower houses of parliament. Therefore, a comparative study of personalization as a campaign strategy also benefits considerably from a rational choice analytic perspective on this variance in institutions conceptualized as rigid exogenous rules of the game not to be changed in the course of one election campaign. The formal arrangements governing elections define the choice set (Sniderman, 2000) which the actors can pick from and allocate expected utility to these alternatives. In the context of election campaigns, the utility is easily quantifiable in vote shares and seats. Remembering our working definition of personalization as a campaign strategy being a *choice* to advertise persons, made by *rational* actors for political *gains*, institutions have to be an integral part of the explanation of this phenomenon. Although

campaign strategists cannot foresee every single turn of events during a campaign, we can expect them to choose their advertising strategy based on a probability calculus of success, influenced greatly by the institutional arrangements in which the election takes place. Therefore, conceptualizing campaign managers as rational actors within a fixed set of institutions can contribute a lot to our understanding of the choice for personalization as a campaign strategy. The reasons for and consequences of assuming campaign managers as rational actors for the generation of hypotheses will be justified in detail below, but we first turn to theorizing the expected effects of the institutional context on campaign personalization. In line with the argument presented above, Rahat and Sheafer (2007) state that personalization of institutions, like the adoption of open lists or direct elections of heads of government, preceded all other forms of political personalization, namely in the media and in politicians' and voters' behavior. So incentive structures provided by institutions have to be taken into account when explaining political behavior like campaign strategies. Karvonen (2010: 23–24) comprehensively laid out the merits of various schools of institutionalism and institutional analysis for studying the personalization of politics in general, also claiming a fundamental effect of institutions on political personalization. Also Farrell (1996: 162) listed institutional factors to consider when investigating campaign styles and strategies. The characteristics of the political system at large, for example presidential vs. parliamentary systems or the degree of centralization, should be taken into account along with electoral by-laws and established campaign practices when evaluating the utility of strategic components of election campaigns. Besides institutional factors structuring utility of negative vs. positive campaigning or decentralized vs. centralized campaign organization, Farrell also observes that they affect the strategic use of personalization, for which presidential elections for example are clearly more favorable than parliamentary systems with a coalition executive (Farrell, 1996: 164–168). So let us review the different institutions relevant for personalization and their expected influence on the choice for a personalized campaign strategy.

As a framework of frameworks, different types of political system beyond the immediate electoral process clearly offer varying incentives for campaign personalization. First and foremost, the amount of power vested in the executive cannot be neglected when explaining the choice for a personalized campaign strategy. Especially concentrated personalization on leaders is more likely in election campaigns for executive offices. Furthermore, in the process of the presidentialization of the parliamentary governmental systems of western Europe (Poguntke & Webb, 2005) with an ever growing institutional as well as public focus on prime ministers as supreme leaders, campaigns for legislatures determining the selection of an institutionally strong parliamentary executive like the German Chancellor or the British Prime Minister can be expected to be personalized to a similar extent as presidential campaigns, much more than in political systems led by institutionally weak prime ministers or collegial government bodies like in Switzerland (Kriesi, 2012: 827–828).

Besides this immediate effect of presidentialism or presidentialization, the executive's power and visibility also influences the campaign styles of parallel legislative elections. The literature on popular American presidential candidates' coattail effects helping legislators of their respective party into office (Calvert & Ferejohn, 1983) as well as leader effects in parliamentary elections (Garzia, 2014) show these political celebrities' potential for influencing the level of personalization of a campaign, even when they are not directly linked to the appointment of chief executives. This effect is most visible in parallel elections of the executive and the legislature as well as in parliamentary systems, where the top legislative candidate is the designated chief executive. Campaign managers try to capitalize on the visible top candidates' popularity and therefore have an incentive to associate other candidates of the same party either as similar or friends with the popular frontrunner, or actively seek endorsements by him or her. But this also works in the opposite direction. Particularly unpopular candidates make an easy target for negative campaigning against parties and candidates associated with them, so that the opposing side can be expected to actively communicate or imply a link between an unpopular

top candidate as a liability for his or her fellow party members (Pruysers & Cross, forthcoming).

Both these strategies especially increase the amount of concentrated personalization.

As a second influential institution, the electoral system, or more specific the electoral formula, comes to mind when talking about institutions structuring electoral behavior on the demand as well as the supply side of the electoral market. Strategic decisions by voters as well as parties are heavily preconditioned by the institutional context of electoral systems (Cox 1997). Ultimately, the electoral formula structures seat allocation based on vote shares and therefore governs the ultimate goal of election campaigns. Its effects on the personalization of politics are twofold. First, it offers different degrees of incentives for candidates to cultivate a “personal vote” (Carey & Shugart, 1995; Colomer, 2011), which means support by voters based on personal reputation or services and not party membership. To gain and maintain this personal vote, a personalization strategy can naturally be expected to contribute. Candidates in open-list systems have incentives to present themselves as persons with a firm ideological rooting in their party, but also to be different from their ballot-mates to generate vote advantages when it comes to seat allocation within a list, leading to a more personalized campaign strategy. Also parties can be expected to invest in a personalized strategy in a more candidate-centered electoral system. To present their candidate as distinguishable from the competitors in a single member district, party strategists also have incentives for personalization as policies are expected to converge in races for single seats.

Second, the electoral formula also determines the usefulness of personalization as one form of information shortcut (Shugart et al., 2005). In open-list systems, information requirements for voters rise with increasing district magnitude, because the number of potential winners is proportional to the seats available and the potential rank-ordering of candidates is not fixed beforehand (Shugart et al., 2005: 440–441). In these systems, voters are left alone by parties with the decision of how to compose or balance the ballot in favor of their best interests and have to rely on the personal information about candidates which is provided to outperform

competitors on the same list. However, in closed-list systems the voter's information requirements about the candidates increase with smaller district magnitudes. To come to an informed decision in this context, party cues work as a better heuristic the larger the district gets (Shugart et al., 2005: 440), because (mathematically) the voter can only rely on a balanced ballot reflecting the party's overall ideological and policy stance when the district is large enough. Consequently, in closed-list systems, the smaller the district's number of seats, the more personalized information has to be taken into account by voters. These information requirements make attractive a personalization strategy in which persons are offered as commodity packages of information to voters, who can then heuristically save information costs.

But not only does the electoral formula shape the utility of choosing a personalized campaign strategy. Electoral by-laws and campaign regulations also have an effect on the expected advantage of personalization. If they restrict the use of media outlets which are more receptive to and suitable for personalization than others, they diminish these channels' direct effects as well as their spillover effects on the utility of personalization as a campaign strategy. A ban on TV advertisements for example, the advertising form most receptive to personalized messages (Farrell 1996: 173–175; Karvonen, 2010: 86), devalues the utility of personalization generated by its appeal to this media outlet as well as delaying its potential spillover effect on personalization in other media outlets. The same can be argued for the presence or absence of TV debates between leading candidates. The personalization spillover into other media outlets and the horse-race journalism these debates create, namely announcements in other news, the buildup before the debate, and the analyses afterwards, is considerable (Reinemann & Wilke, 2007) and a ban or non-establishment of this particular form of campaign advertising makes the choice especially for concentrated leadership personalization much less promising to campaigners.

Last but not least, the decentralization of a political system, be it federalism, devolution, or other forms of power sharing between levels of government, also has to be taken into account when explaining the choice for personalized campaigning. However, the potential mechanisms at work linking relative amounts of personalization to decentralization are rather complex and include numeric considerations, expectations about difference of national and regional representation in salience, as well as a notion of regional and local government and legislatures to be closer to the people.

First of all, there are simply more prominent politicians available for campaign personalization in decentralized systems, for example national leaders supporting their regional co-partisans with campaign visits, or regional leaders as candidates for national office, trying to capitalize on their recognition value for the national party. Whether these patterns are systematic (e.g. federalism showing more personalization than unitarian systems) or idiosyncratic (e.g. a particularly popular regional leader running for national office generating a lot of personalization, or an unpopular national leader's party running in a European contest and not wanting to be associated with said leader generating less personalization) will be a question to answer in the analysis of determinants of personalization.

Second, the variance in salience of elections on different levels of government also has to be taken into account when predicting levels of personalization linked to decentralization of a political system. Assuming that personalization is a costly strategy (e.g. in need of paid public relations consulting) and party strategists as rational actors only engage in it when the expected gains are high enough, elections with lower salience can be expected to systematically show lower levels of personalization. In the tradition of second-order election theory (Reif & Schmitt, 1980) and its adaption to regional elections (e.g. Burkhart, 2005), national first-order elections then should show the highest level of personalization. But since we are unsure if this link holds true, and since we should not a priori assign second-order status to all regional and European

elections in all contexts (Hough & Jeffery, 2006; Schakel & Jeffery, 2013), the formulation of directed expectations will not be straightforward.

Third, although interpersonal contact between politicians and voters, and therefore the cultivation of a personal vote, intuitively should be more likely in the smaller constituencies of municipalities and regions than in nation states, most type I regions (municipalities are not covered here, see Hooghe & Marks, 2003) that are vested with considerable political power, and their institutional setup therefore including a regional legislature and executive (Marks et al., 2008), represent populations of hundreds of thousands of people or more, which makes organizing these polities by interpersonal contact equally inefficient as in nation states. Parties, cleavage-based programmatic linkage, and mediatised communication by politicians are also the norm in type I regions as are the ones under investigation here. For all these reasons, regional and European elections should and will not be conceptualized as fundamentally different from or a priori subordinate to national elections here (Jeffery & Schakel, 2013), especially since campaign personalization can work as a reinforcement of as well as a remedy for “closeness to the people”, but their situative differences will be taken into account.

Between decentralized and centralized political systems as a whole, however, quantitative and qualitative differences in personalization of election campaigns can still be reasonably expected. With regard to general personalization, as discussed above, campaigns in decentralized systems should be more personalized just because of the fact that more prominent politicians like regional heads of government or leaders of regionalist parties are available for campaign managers to work with. This effect should be visible in national and European elections in decentralized systems, where the above-mentioned regional celebrities can support the national party, as well as in regional elections, where the national leadership can provide coattails for party comrades or targets for negative campaigning by the opponent. In addition, institutional decentralization also begets decentralization in campaign organization, where sub-chapters of parties or single candidates have additional incentives to personalize their party

communication with regard to regional and local political celebrities (Zittel, 2015). Concentrated personalization, however, can be expected to be highest in centralized systems, where power and the subsequent media attention is concentrated at the top of the national executive, be it directly elected in a presidential campaign or a contest between the top candidates of the largest parties for a government-forming majority.

All these institutionalist arguments explaining campaign behavior can be tested best in cross-sectional comparative research (Bowler & Farrell, 2011: 668). This type of research design aiming for variance between countries, institutions, parties, and candidacies allows the conceptualization of campaign strategy as an interplay between circumstances and actions of motivated players in the election campaign game. In the following, I will theorize campaign managers as rational actors facing the circumstances above and derive hypotheses about the levels of personalization as a result of their rational strategic behavior.

2.5 Personalization as a Party Strategy

How can the amount of strategic personalization in an election campaign be explained? I defined personalized campaigning above as a purposeful act aiming for the goal of electoral gains. It therefore should be conceptualized as the outcome of a decision by rational actors, like campaign managers or party officials. This conceptualization facilitates the theoretical inclusion of not only established modernization approaches to explaining personalization, but further important institutional and party-level complementing factors. In the following, I will discuss the appropriateness of conceptualizing party strategists as rational actors, review the modernization arguments explaining personalization from this actor-conscious perspective, and derive hypotheses combining the contributions of modernization, institutions, party competition as well as party and candidate qualities to explaining the choice for a personalized campaign strategy with a rationalist argument for choosing personalization strategies.

2.5.1 Campaign Strategists as Rational Actors

To explain the amount of personalization in an election campaign, I will rely on four assumptions. First, the goal of every election campaign is to maximize vote shares and seats. Second, personalization helps in reaching this goal. Third, campaign managers are rational actors pursuing this goal. And fourth, parties in election campaigns can be treated as unitary actors. Some might find this last assumption problematic (Zittel, 2015), but in explaining personalization strategies on a party level, it is justified for the following reasons. First, even without having complete control over every candidate, resource, or ground-worker, the party, represented by campaign leadership and assisted by PR divisions or external consultants, still provides the overarching strategy by coordinating and selectively offering support to candidates and sections following their strategy. It controls the lion's share of campaign expenses (although the distinction between party and candidate budget is hard to make in one-person parties) as well as the indispensable political brand name under which candidacies still have to run to be recognized as viable alternatives (Mair, 2013: 95). Second, personalization helps to align the interests of leadership, party base, and candidates. Leadership wants to reap the benefits of coattail or celebrity effects as well as the potential additional appeal of popular candidates (be it through compensating for centrist policy or through charismatic linkage), aligning their interests with the backbencher candidates who want to advertise their uniqueness to the end of increasing their chances of securing a seat. Also, a personalization strategy by the party motivates candidates to invest their own celebrity status and personal resources as well as networks into the central party campaign⁵. The party base benefits from personalization because it is offered a potential for identification, which not only makes campaigning in their local constituency easier, but also motivates them to invest their volunteering capacities into the central campaign, aligning their interests with leadership and candidates. Some might argue

⁵ This strategy was for example deliberately chosen by the Social Democrats of the canton of Zurich in 2011.

that institutions like federalism, decentralization, or small districts might predetermine a fragmented campaign organization incompatible with conceptualizing parties in campaigns as unitary actors. But given that increased fragmentation of party organization theoretically should only lead to more or equal, but never less personalization, this organizational fragmentation can only function as a mediator variable in explaining campaign personalization. All explanatory factors considered here which are related to increased fragmentation (federalism, catch-all profile, candidate-centered electoral formulas) have been theoretically included to explain increased personalization. So even if campaign organization is empirically decentralized, analyzing the personalization of campaign communication, which aligns the interests of party leadership, candidates, and party base, justifies this unitary-actor assumption.

Following these four assumptions, we can model campaign managers' behavior as directed to reach the goal of the campaign. To explain personalization, the subset of behavior we are interested in, a combination of exogenous givens (e.g. the electoral formula), their position relative to others (e.g. their party's ideological stance), and their resources (e.g. professional staff) have to be taken into account. Since we conceptualized the party in an election campaign as a unitary actor steered by the campaign management, a political marketing approach for "selling" the party to the voters is the consequence of rational actions of the party. In political marketing, personalization contributes to the attraction of voters as customers on the political market in three stages (Kotler & Kotler, 1999: 8): Making a political message suitable for media coverage in the communication stage of marketing a political candidacy, reducing complexity as a heuristic for voters in the image-building stage, and contributing to the unique selling point of a candidate or party in the stage of positioning. Not coincidentally, these three stages of political marketing correspond neatly to the general factors fostering political personalization theorized above: Media suitability, complexity reduction, and providing alternatives to dysfunctional ideological competition and linkage.

Personalization makes campaign communication more visible by making the personalized content appeal to modern commercialized media. If political communication content is framed in a personalized way, media tends to receive, process, and distribute this content more readily, because the message fits easier in its logic of news value. Thereby, the campaign communication also generates “more bang for the buck” as a result of personalization.

Personalization also contributes to the direct psychological appeal of campaign communication to voters. In the complex world of political decision-making, candidates and personalized campaign content can serve as heuristics to order information, making classical political information more accessible to the cognitively and motivationally limited individual that the average voter tends to be. Personalization as a heuristic limits information costs for voters and therefore alleviates political apathy. Ideally for the campaigner, it alleviates the apathy of voters tending towards the candidate or party issuing the personalized campaign message.

Last but not least, personalization contributes to the unique selling point of a candidacy by adding to or framing information about political positions, ideology, or valence. Especially in the modern, de-ideologized context dominated by catch-all parties’ and cartel parties’ competition for the median voter, persons and their presentation can make the crucial difference and contribute to the unique selling point of a policy offer brought forward by a party in an election campaign. This can be done via personalization concentrated on leadership, but also by promoting lower-level candidates, for example as mavericks or bridge-builders at the rim of the party ideology, as the “social conscience” of a party, or other roles to increase appeal to the voters and widen the party’s appeal to a larger segment of the electorate. Also, populist challengers can facilitate advertising their uniqueness as embodiments of the “will of the people” when concentrating on a charismatic leadership figure. These three effects of personalization contributing to the success of an election campaign should motivate managers responsible for campaigns to consider personalization as a part of their strategy, especially if they are driven by utility-maximizing motivations.

The means to reach electoral goals that a personalized campaign can provide have now been identified: media suitability, reduction of complexity, and distinction from alternatives. But in which circumstances do these means work better and in which do they perform worse or not at all? To analyze this question we incorporate lessons from rational choice institutional analysis (Shepsle, 2006). A rational campaign strategist has to take several factors into account to come to a decision: his or her resources, the rules of the game, modernity of the context as well as the action of others. Therefore, we will cover all these facilitating and restricting factors in the explanation of personalization in election campaigns in the following hypotheses.

2.5.2 Personalization: A Modern Phenomenon

Personalization of election campaigning has been theorized as part of a more general trend towards modernization of campaigning, including further aspects like professionalization of the party and campaign apparatus, media orientation, and detachment of citizens from parties in particular and politics in general due to increasing complexity (Mancini & Swanson, 1996: 14–16). But theoretical approaches relying on modernization are notoriously plagued by a bundling of driving factors, interlinked phenomena, and a teleological time dimension. Modernization explains individual phenomena only to a certain extent, because the relationships of causes and effects are unclear. For example: Did commercialization of media outlets lead to a professionalization of party apparatus feeding the media with personalized information, or did this information increase the potential for the media to earn money, leading to commercialization? Probably the first is true, but without a restructuring of the modernization arguments with the help of the rational paradigm, we cannot put these hypothesized relationships to a satisfactory test. It therefore is essential to conceptualize and hypothesize the influence of mediatization and complexity separately.

A modern media environment which is receptive to personalized communication is one of the prerequisites for a choice of personalized campaigning. If campaign strategists cannot hope that

their personalized message is received and transported by the media, the act of personalization would lose one of its three big advantages, the media appeal. Above we discussed what makes a media system favorable towards personalization: professionalization, commercialization, and technological advance. As in most of modernization theory, these factors tend to occur simultaneously, but in different intensities at different points in time. They also tend to be seen as universal and converging (Kriesi, 2012: 828).

H1: The more mediatized an electoral arena, the more personalized the campaign content used in it.

Another integral consequence of modernization is the increased complexity of the world as such, as well as the political sphere to regulate this complex world. As stated above, personalization can help here to reduce this complexity by offering candidates as heuristics for voters. Candidates and persons representing a certain political brand, a bundle of ideological and policy offers, can in addition to the party label help voters to make informed decisions when information costs are high and the capacity and motivation to gather information are low.

H2: The more complex the political arena appears to the voters, the more personalized an election campaign conducted in it.

Modernization also affects the actors in a system responsible for the choice for or against personalized campaigning, here campaign strategists and party officials, in the process of self-mediatization theorized above. I will discuss these implications together with the other predictors on the party level below.

In addition to the necessity for disentangling the facets of modernization actually influencing personalization of election campaigns, which I took into account here, one also has to consider factors unrelated to societal or media modernization. The constellation of resources, opportunities, and restrictions, as well as competition patterns, that campaigning actors face are influenced by far more than just the modern society and media environment.

2.5.3 The Fixed Context: Formal Institutions and Regulations

Rahat and Sheafer (2007) postulate that the personalization of institutions lies at the root of all other forms of political personalization. Consequently, we must include the institutional environment, the rigid rules of the game, in the analysis of personalization as a campaign strategy. We have to take four types of institutions into account: the electoral system, the electoral regulations and by-laws, the regime type mainly determined by the executive's power, and the decentralization of the political system.

The electoral system underlies two interrelated advantages of personalization. First, candidate-centered systems for example with single-member districts increase the utility of personalization for the unique selling point of the candidacy. Second, these candidate-centered systems also have different information requirements for the voters, in which personalization is a useful heuristic. In candidate-centered systems, personalized cues work better for voters to make an informed decision influencing the outcome of the election in line with their preferences than in others.

Electoral systems are seldom changed, so since this feature of the electoral competition is known widely before the election, campaign managers can be expected to take these merits of personalization for the unique selling point and the heuristic accessibility into account. Consequently:

H3: The more candidate-centered the electoral formula, the more personalization in the election campaign.

In addition, campaign managers also face the fallout of the presidentialization of politics in institutions and political communication. In a globalized and mediatized world, the executive, and especially its chairperson, have gained in influence. This trend is conceptualized as universal, but especially important on the national level. The campaign for the main spoils of the election, the chief executive's office, therefore attracts more media attention, making personalization's news value useful, and, since it is fought as a competition for one seat, also

benefits from personalization via the unique-selling-point mechanism. Political systems with strong executives, which are especially attractive for candidates as well as their spin doctors, therefore should generate a higher level in personalization compared to regional or European executives or executives in consensual systems.

But not only do we have to take the direct effect of strong presidential or presidentialized executives as the spoils of a campaign into account. Parallel or timely close executive elections also have indirect presidentialization spillover effects on legislative campaigns, namely by coattail as well as demonstration effects of executive candidate centeredness in media attention and campaign strategy.

Finally, presidentialization via televised debates of candidates for chief executive office and/or top candidates of smaller parties' lists also concentrates media attention to presidential or presidentialized candidates. This special campaign forum is highly conducive to personalization of leadership. When publicly broadcast debates are established, the campaign at large can also be expected to be more personalized. The spillover effects of TV have been theorized to be one of the strongest drivers of campaign personalization. So we also have to cover this media-related facet of presidentialization when measuring it.

H4: The more presidentialized the electoral arena, the more personalized the election campaign.

But not all parties are challenged or can profit equally from disproportionate attention to the executive race. Those parties which run a candidate for (chief) executive office can exploit these candidates' visibility gains much better than smaller parties with no chance of ending up in top government positions. Therefore, the effect of presidentialization of hypothesis 4 can be expected to not only contribute to a more personalized campaign environment in general, it should also additionally increase personalization in campaigns of parties running candidates for (chief) executive positions.

H5.1: Campaigns of parties running candidates for executive office are more personalized than campaigns of parties running no candidates for executive office.

H5.2: This candidate effect is larger in highly presidentialized systems.

Another set of arena-specific factors is the level of government on which the respective election takes place, as well as the country-specific context. Both these factors will be included and modeled in the process of hypothesis testing, but since the defining features of the countries' systems with regard to personalization are already captured in systematic fashion above (presidentialization, electoral formula) and the expectations towards the levels of government are variable and highly dependent on context (see section 2.4; Jeffery & Schakel 2013), I do not formulate explicit hypotheses for countries and levels of government.

The influence of institutional factors, combined with mediatization and complexity, is supposed to affect every party and candidate competing in the same arena. But as we have already seen in the case of presidentialization, party qualities also have to be taken into account. To get a comprehensive picture of campaign personalization including intra-election variance, we have to add further partisan qualities and their relative position in the political competition to our explanation and assess the influence of these factors.

2.5.4 The More Fluid Context: Party Competition in the Electoral Arena

When thinking about determinants of personalization as a campaign strategy, the competitive situation of the respective electoral arena cannot be ignored. In competitive democracies, parties and candidates do not only have to attract attention and convince voters of their fitness for office, they also have to make clear that they are the better choice than other alternatives present. Those are the main purposes of election campaigns and therefore also a factor influencing the choice for or against a personalization strategy.

From a marketing perspective, a candidacy has to offer a unique selling proposition as well as concept specificity (Kotler & Kotler, 1999). Both of these factors can be enhanced by personalization of an election campaign. Crucial in this respect is the question of product positioning (Kotler & Kotler, 1999: 15). A candidacy classically offers a bundle of policy suggestions to the voters, tied together by ideology. But in frameworks where these bundles are cartelized and virtually indistinguishable, or if parties compete for the median voter in single-seat districts, the policy and ideology propositions cannot provide a unique selling proposition anymore. Here, personalization as additional information can be used by party strategists to infuse the candidacy with uniqueness. Assuming unimodally distributed voter preferences, the following hypothesis will be tested:

H6: The more centrist a party's position is in the competition, the more personalized its campaign.

Personalization also contributes to populist parties' unique selling propositions. However, they advertise a special kind of uniqueness: The embodiment of the "people's will". Regardless of their ideological stance, personalization helps populist parties to appeal to the voters presenting them a leader figure whose charisma and guidance they should follow. Consequently:

H7: Populist parties' campaigns are more personalized than other parties'.

Taking these factors into account alleviates the problems single-country or single-election studies have with testing the classic modernization hypothesis of cartelized party competition and charismatic linkage patterns on the systemic level only. Coincidental false positives or negatives can be prevented by looking at the specific party constellation of an election already on the meso-level. Controlling for the competitive setup of a campaign, this theoretical framework allows the influence of context on personalization to be examined more thoroughly than before.

2.5.5 Willing and Able to Personalize: Resources for Personalization in the Party

Having dealt with the contexts in which parties and candidates compete and the likelihood of personalization derived from those, I now turn towards the qualities of the actors themselves. Since the choice for a specific action is not only determined by the expected payoffs, but also by the costs an actor faces in doing so, these actors' resources and qualities are integral to the explanation. When it comes to the choice for personalization as part of a campaign strategy, one has to keep in mind that this is costly for political actors. Qualified personnel as well as a certain amount of financial resources are required to professionally and successfully implement a properly personalized campaign that can provide media suitability, distinction from alternatives, and reduction of complexity.

Both these highly intercorrelated prerequisites have been identified as necessary for campaign professionalization (Gibson & Römmele, 2001; Gibson & Römmele, 2009), which increases the probability for personalization (Holtz-Bacha, 2002). In addition, these two main factors conducive to the professionalization of campaigning, financial resources and professionalized staff, also make parties more receptive to business-like conduction of media campaigns in contrast to volunteer-driven campaigns.

H8: The more professionalized a campaign, the more personalized its content.

Last but not least, a campaign also needs suitable persons as candidates to capitalize on when stressing their qualities as a strategy. But what constitutes this suitability? Locality (Shugart et al., 2005), good looks (Verhulst et al., 2010), actual or perceived leadership qualities (Langer, 2007), morality, and many more traits have been theorized and tested to make candidates appear more favorable to voters and therefore convincing as the best alternative. Without digging deep into the complex interplay of these factors appealing to different subgroups of the electorate and probably not finding a convincing answer, I will rely on an approximation of all these quality dimensions, which indicates a real-world test result for each and every candidate's combination of qualities: incumbency. Especially in executive and small-magnitude elections,

incumbents can be assumed to already have convinced a fair share of voters of their suitability for office and therefore also carry suitability for personalization. Furthermore, the name recognition these incumbents enjoy as well as their track record also make them a suitable carrier of brand heuristics, reducing complexity in the voting booth.

H9: Incumbents' campaigns are more personalized than non-incumbents'.

With this discussion of incumbency in the choice for personalization strategies, all relevant explanatory levels have been covered. Assessing the relative importance of each factor and the interplay between them will be the task I tackle in the following chapters.

2.6 Concluding Remarks

The list of potential theoretical explanations for the choice for personalization as a campaign strategy is long. In addition to classical modernization arguments like media system receptiveness and increasing complexity of the world, I have discussed the theoretical contribution of institutions, party competition, party qualities as well as candidate traits. To test this wide variety of arguments, a comparative approach is inevitable. Fortunately, data on campaign strategies of party sections in regional, national, and European elections in five countries (Canada, France, Germany, Spain, Switzerland) under different institutional rules have been collected in the framework of the “Making Electoral Democracy Work” project (Blais, 2010). This rich variety of campaign communication data (TV ads, newspaper ads, manifestos) as well as interviews with party strategists is highly conducive to the study of personalization as a result of strategic choices made by political actors. It also allows the inherent differences of campaign channels in catering to personalization (e.g. TV vs. newspaper) to be estimated as a control.

With this study we will be able to analyze more clearly what drives the personalization of election campaigns. It is not merely replacing ideology, party, and policy, but creating value

added by complementing, framing, and amplifying these central contents of campaign communication.

3. Data and Methods

To effectively test the influence institutions, context, competition patterns, and party qualities, as hypothesized above, have on campaign personalization, I have to consider three key aspects in designing an insightful study: Case selection, choice of data sources, and modelling. The cases under investigation have to cover a reasonable amount of variance on the explanatory factors, as well as on the amount and type of personalization, while still being comparable. Within these cases, data sources have to be carefully chosen to suit the research question and concepts related to this question, namely being as unmediated and comparatively available as possible. Thirdly, the method of analysis has to enable the researcher to take variance in a limited number of cases on different levels of analysis (e.g. electoral system as well as relative party positions) into account. Furthermore, it also has to be able to cope with the fact that observations like branches of the same party in different elections or parties competing in the same election can hardly be assumed to function independently of each other. Bayesian regression analysis can provide these qualities, even with the medium number of cases at hand. The necessity for variance and comparability will be satisfied by an informed case selection within the countries of Canada, France, Germany, Spain, and Switzerland, which will be described and justified in the following section. The choice of TV advertisements, newspaper advertisements, party manifestos, and interviews as well as survey data sources on the grounds of being as unmediated as possible and their utility and suitability for the analysis will be discussed in the subsequent section. Finally, the method of analysis, a Bayesian regression approach, will be justified in the ultimate section of this chapter.

3.1 Case Selection

This study on personalization as a campaign strategy will be conducted in the framework of the “Making Electoral Democracy Work” (MEDW) project (Blais, 2010), a data collection effort to unveil parties’ and voters’ strategic behavior under different institutional rules, competition

patterns, and their combinations and interplay. This project's main goal is in line with my research project, trying to disentangle and evaluate the relative explanatory power of institutional, partisan, and contextual explanatory factors of campaign personalization. Also, the choice of cases and data sources by MEDW is appropriate to investigate personalization as a campaign strategy, as we will see in the following.

The data collection efforts of MEDW are centered around the relevant⁶ parties or party branches, competing in regions, for votes for representation on different levels of government, so also for the national or European level. This party (1) * region (2) * election (3) setup will also constitute the main unit of analysis for this project explaining personalization strategies. Therefore, for example, the German Social Democratic Party (1) competing in Bavaria (2) for votes to the European Parliament, the national Bundestag, and the regional Landtag (3) represents three cases in this analysis. Also data collection was based on regions wherever possible. Surveys and media analyses were carried out specifically suited to their regional environment. One regional and one national newspaper were coded for the media analysis and surveys were carried out in regions, not nationally. Programmatic differentiations between parties were measured regionally wherever possible. Also district sizes and interviews with campaign managers were recorded at this level of analysis. Comparing these units as cases has multiple advantages: It allows analyses of the effects of institutions, modernization, and party qualities separately, namely separating for example the between-country variance of media systems from the intra-country variance of electoral systems on different levels of government, party competition patterns in different regions (produced e.g. presence or absence of regionalist parties) and population qualities (e.g. media consumption or perceived complexity of politics).

⁶ Party branches are relevant if they are currently represented in the legislature or came close to winning representation (= parties that needed to increase their vote share by less than one percentage point or less than one third of their vote). If there are new parties that appear likely to influence the outcome of the election, they are included as well.

This regional differentiation also is necessary to account for variance in campaign strategies and party competition patterns within countries, which tend to get blurred and lumped together in single-level cross-country analyses. Especially when facing decentralized models of party organization such as in Canada or Switzerland, when including regional parties and their strongholds like in Spain, Canada, or Germany, or sociodemographic and ideological differences between regions, the party*region*election approach promises differentiated insight compared to the inevitable packaging of institutions, modernization, and party competition patterns when comparing national elections only. Last but not least, it also conveniently increases the number of cases holding the requirement for country-specific expertise constant. Instead of for example a national analysis of six relevant German parties competing for national votes in a mixed system (6 cases), we can cover up to 6 parties * 3 levels of government * 2 regions (36 cases) in Germany alone, allowing a more thorough quantitative analysis. The partly nested and partly crossed data structure resulting from this approach to data collection obviously is a price to pay in this endeavor. Parties competing in the same regional electoral arena as well as branches of the same party can and should not be treated as independent from each other. But advances in statistical modelling have appropriate answers to dealing with this data structure, which is very common in comparative political analysis. The expected clustering of these cases will be tackled with appropriate Bayesian estimation techniques, as will be outlined at the end of this chapter.

The data for MEDW has been collected on two to three levels of government (national, regional, and European, where applicable) in five countries (Canada, France, Germany, Spain, Switzerland), concentrating on two regions each (see Table 3.1). Data collection started in 2011 and to this date has covered 15 elections and over 150 party branches competing in it. Like my analysis, MEDW concentrated its efforts mainly on legislative elections. Without a doubt, including executive elections would add valuable variance in personalization within country cases, but because of executives' typically low variance in district size (mostly one),

number of candidates competing (mostly two viable candidates) and disproportionately high media attention, differentiation between explanatory factors will be aggravated and comparability reduced. Nevertheless, I will take executive elections' influence on parallel legislative elections into account and control for executive spillovers, like presidential coattails, especially when explaining leadership personalization.

Table 3.1 Elections covered by MEDW

	Canada	France	Germany	Spain	Switzerland
EU	-	2014 European Parliament (7+7)	2014 European Parliament (8+8)	2014 European Parliament (10+10)	-
national	-	2012 national parliament in IDF (10) and PACA (10)	2013 national parliament in LS (8) and BY (8)	2011 national parliament in CAT (6) and MAD (6)	2011 national parliament (2 chambers) in ZH (7+8) and LU (5+8)
regional	2011/12 regional parliaments in ON (3) and QC (6)	-	2013 regional parliament in LS (6) and BY (7)	2012 regional parliament in CAT (7)	2011 regional parliament in ZH (9) and LU (7)

Notes: Number of parties in parentheses; ON=Province of Ontario, QC= Province of Quebec, IDF=Region Île-de-France, PACA= Region Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, LS=Land Lower Saxony, BY=Land Bavaria, CAT=Autonomous Community of Catalonia, MAD=Autonomous Community of Madrid, ZH=Canton of Zurich, LU=Canton of Lucerne

The main explanatory variable of interest for MEDW is the electoral system (see Table 3.2). Case selection was therefore predominantly driven by the intention to cover a wide variety of electoral systems while still ensuring comparability in other domains. This led to the choice of Canada as a representative of first-past-the-post, France with its two-round runoff system, Germany mixing single-member district (SMD) elements with an overall proportional representation (PR) system, Spain with multimember districts (MMDs) and closed lists, and

Switzerland with PR in MMDs and open lists for the lower chamber as well as two-round majoritarian elections for the members of the upper chamber. Including the European PR elections in national districts and regional elections mimicking, but not always completely corresponding to the respective national ones adds further valuable variance to the pool of electoral systems investigated here in several institutional dimensions. First of all, district sizes from 1 (Canada, France) to 96 (Germany EU) are covered in this sample, including a mix of both SMDs and MMDs (Germany national). Second, lists are open (Switzerland, Bavaria) or closed. Third, proportional representation (Spain, Switzerland lower chamber, Germany) or majoritarian rules (Canada, France, Switzerland upper chamber) are applied within this sample as well as direct and indirect elections of the executive. Even within countries, the electoral systems can differ between levels of government (e.g. PR with national districts European elections vs. Germany's mixed system, France's runoff system and Spain's small to medium sized MMDs), covering even more variance on the institutional explanatory factors within the same-country case. We therefore can test the effects of electoral systems theorized above not only across countries, but also include institutional variance and simultaneously control for comparable levels of modernization and mediatization within countries.

Between countries, the levels of mediatization, a component of modernization theorized to drive campaign personalization, can also be expected to show variance. The sample covers all three types of media systems found in the Western world by Hallin and Mancini (2004): the Polarized Pluralist model (France, Spain), the Democratic Corporatist model (Germany, Switzerland), and the Liberal model (Canada). Although scholars expect these models to converge in the process of globalization, the persistent links between media and political system supports the expectation of variance in mediatization of election campaigns leading to different amounts of campaign personalization.

Table 3.2 Qualities of electoral systems under investigation

	electoral system family	district sizes	average district size	elector al tiers	open/ closed lists	executive election
Canada regional (ON, QC)	plurality	1	1	1	closed	indirect
France EU	PR	3-15	9.25	1	closed	indirect
France national	two-round runoff	1	1	1	closed	direct
Germany EU	PR	96	96	1	closed	indirect
Germany national	mixed- member PR	1 (tier 1) 2-64 (tier 2)	1 (tier 1) 18.7 (tier 2)	2	closed	indirect
Germany regional (LS)	mixed- member PR	1 (tier 1) 60 (tier 2)	1 (tier 1) 60 (tier 2)	2	closed	indirect
Germany regional (BY)	mixed- member PR	1 (tier 1) 8-30 (tier 2)	1 (tier 1) 12.9 (tier 2)	2	open	indirect
Spain EU	PR	54	54	1	closed	indirect
Spain national (lower house)	PR	1-36	6.7	1	closed	indirect
Spain regional (CAT)	PR	15-85	33.8	1	closed	indirect
Switzerland national (lower chamber)	PR	1-34	4.3	1	open	indirect
Switzerland national (upper chamber)	two-round majoritarian	1-2	1.8	1	open	indirect
Switzerland regional (LU)	PR	7-30	20	1	open	direct
Switzerland regional (ZH)	biproportional apportionment	4-17	10	2	open	direct

Also, the institutional setups of the respective political systems at large cover theoretically interesting variation. Centralized (France), decentralized (Spain), and federally organized (Germany, Canada, Switzerland) countries are included as well as systems with directly elected

executives (France, Swiss cantons) and parliamentary governments. Also, the patterns of party competition vary between as well as within the countries under investigation here.

So the case selection does cover variance on the main explanatory variables, but why are elections in these selected countries comparable? First of all, they have all been stable democracies for a considerable amount of time and with a democratic history that made the establishment of cleavage-based politics possible. The cleavage patterns formed in the late 19th and early 20th century shape the established party systems until today and mobilization of societal groups had enough time (besides fascist and occupational interruptions in Germany, Spain, and France) to produce stable patterns of programmatic linkage for representation purposes. Since the late 1970s (Spain), the late 1940s (Germany, France), or even before (Canada, Switzerland), these countries enjoyed a democratic, peaceful, and prosperous history. They all are also members of the OECD since the 1960s, integrated in globalized patterns of trade and economic competition. So a comparable amount of overall economic modernity and development as well as established patterns of party competition can safely be assumed. But when looking at alternatives to programmatic party–voter linkage, for example charismatic linkage most prone to personalization, the parties in the countries under investigation can also be expected to vary in strategies. Although democratic rule has been stable for more than 100 years in Canada and Switzerland, it has been interrupted at different times throughout France’s, Germany’s, and Spain’s history. Also, populist parties have been successful to different extents in those countries. Their success ranges from government participation in Switzerland, considerable legislative representation in France, and small but growing success in Germany and Spain to virtual non-existence in Canada. Of further importance when considering alternatives to programmatic linkage is the fact that these countries have been hit to different extents by the economic crisis starting in 2008, contributing to different levels of political and economic uncertainty, in which parties tend to abandon programmatic linkages in favor of other

strategies (Lupu & Riedl, 2013). Also this variance can be expected to contribute to different levels of personalization in election campaigns.

In the institutional domain, these five countries are comparable insofar as political decisions are taken in multilevel government frameworks, in which the national political arena is not the sole place of political decision-making (federalism in Canada, Germany, and Switzerland; regional autonomy in Spain; European Union membership for Germany, France, and Spain). This is not only a commonality these systems share, but also a convenient asset when it comes to comparing the impact of party competition patterns within countries. In multilevel systems, especially with powerful autonomous regions, the party competition patterns differ between the national arena and the regions as well as between the respective regions, while still being held under the same national political-economic contexts. For example regional strongholds of a national party compared with a region where regionalist or ethnic parties successfully compete in the political arena add valuable variance to parties' relative position in the competition. Also, these multilevel settings contribute, besides the increasing complexity of the social world in general, to a level of uncertainty in which parties can be expected to offer personalization as a heuristic for electoral decision-making. For example, the rather technical issues decided on the European level as well as a perceived democratic deficit and a low level of information inflict high information costs on voters in European elections, which can be lowered by parties not only offering ideologically sound policy packages, but also by using personalization as a heuristic or a help to medially enhance their appeal to voters.

Thus the party sections under investigation here, although they are all facing comparable Western established democratic framework conditions, can be expected to show differences in the proportion of personalization used to convey their appeal for voters. How these proportions are measured and how their explanation will be modeled is described in the next sections.

3.2 Data Sources and Operationalizations

Personalization as a campaign strategy has been defined here as an intentional and conscious choice made by party actors for electoral gains, influenced by institutional and context factors, patterns of party competition, and candidacy qualities. This has several implications for the selection of data suitable for this project. On the one hand, the phenomenon personalization that will be explained here has to be measured not on the recipients' side (e.g. with voter surveys), nor on the mediators' level (e.g. by analyzing media coverage), but directly at the source of campaign communication. So the data has to be as unmediated as possible as well as comparable. The data collected in the MEDW framework satisfies these requirements: Newspaper ads, TV ads, manifestos, and interviews with campaign managers were collected and coded as described in this section. To keep national and/or regional interpretations of certain aspects of campaign communication to a minimum, the project group applied the same coding scheme (MEDW, 2011) throughout all the elections in the five countries under investigation, creating a rich and in this form unique dataset of parties' strategic behavior in campaigns. Coding the general appearance of an ad, as done in the Wisconsin ad project (Goldstein & Rivlin, 2007), was combined with measuring the ad's content on different dimensions, with the help of an extended coding scheme following the quasi-sentence approach of the Comparative Manifesto Project (Werner et al., 2011).

The institutional, partisan, and mediatization-related explanatory factors listed in this section are also measured for each and every election (on the contextual level) as well as party in election (the main level of analysis) using official documents and voter surveys. In the following, I will introduce and describe the types of data and operationalizations used for this study in detail.

3.2.1 Operationalizing types of personalization

To measure personalization in campaign communication, it is essential to rely on data sources that are as unmediated as possible. In this project, data collection concentrated on two outlets:

newspaper ads and TV ads⁷. Unlike the completely unmediated party manifestos, both types of ads covered here actually appear in the media. But since they are placed in paid space or airtime provided freely by broadcasting corporations, they are not subject to an editorial process by the respective media outlet. Selecting, biasing, or changing – in short: Editorial influence on the level of personalization as found in media coverage of politics – are not an issue here. So for this project, personalization will be measured in these comparable and widely available outlets of political advertising.

For every election covered by MEDW, all political ads in two leading broadsheet papers, one with national and one with regional circulation, were collected during the 90 days prior to the election in question. In a first step, the advertisements were coded according to their general characteristics (see: Goldstein & Rivlin, 2007; MEDW, 2011), including page, position, size, but also appearance of candidates' pictures, names, symbols, and other general and content-oriented variables. In a second step, the text of the ads was divided into quasi-sentences (qs) following the approach of the Comparative Manifesto Project (Werner et al., 2011: 5–7) and then assigned a code for the actor speaking the quasi-sentence, the object to whom or which the sentence is directed, policy as well as strategic content, and also traits of actors and objects mentioned. If a newspaper ad appeared more than once during the campaign, it was included multiple times in the dataset.

Similarly for the TV advertisements, all political spots broadcast during the 90 days before election day were collected and coded in the same two-step process as described above for the newspaper ads, focusing on general characteristics and quasi-sentences. The weighting of the different spots according to number of appearances was not as easy as with the newspaper advertisements, because few broadcasting stations in the countries and regions under

⁷ Party manifestos were also considered for analysis, but since less than 5% of the statements made in those documents were made by or attributed to candidates or other persons, the variance between parties was too small to expect meaningful results from analyzing them comparatively.

investigation kept track and/or wanted to report the intensity of broadcasting a certain TV ad to the MEDW researchers. But since political TV advertising is typically highly regulated, costly for parties, and pre-produced before the campaign, it is fair to assume that the readily available TV spots are broadcast in more or less equal numbers of times throughout the campaign.

Table 3.3 Overview of dependent variables and operationalizations

variable	operationalization	level of measurement
general individualization framing	candidate's name or picture in ad / all ads	party branch in election
general individualization content	candidate actor or object of qs / all qs	party branch in election
leadership individualization framing	leader's name or picture in ad / all ads	party branch in election
leadership individualization content	leader actor or object of qs / all qs	party branch in election
general privatization framing	candidate pictured in private in ad / all ads	party branch in election
general privatization content	candidate trait mentioned in qs / all qs	party branch in election
leadership privatization framing	leader pictured in private in ad / all ads	party branch in election
leadership privatization content	leader trait mentioned in qs / all qs	party branch in election

With the aforementioned data from newspaper ads and TV spots, the amount of personalization in the campaign can be measured comparatively. But as stated in the theoretical argument, personalization comes in different forms and shapes, which creates the need for differentiation to grasp the varying effects of context and party qualities on the dimensions of personalization. Even when concentrating on the deliberately planned communication by party strategists, *individualization* of political communication concentrating on candidates in general and/or leaders, and *privatization* concentrating on the qualities of politicians instead of policy or ideology, have to be distinguished (van Aelst et al., 2012). MEDW's in-depth coding of

campaign advertisements allows personalization and its dimensions to be adequately and separately measured.

The amount of personalization as *individualization* will be operationalized in two ways, first as the proportion of ads generally showing the picture and/or the name of a candidate compared to the entirety of a party branch's campaign communication through a specific media type (TV or press). This separation of media types is necessary to control for TV's inherent suitability for personalization (Farrell, 1996: 173–175; Karvonen, 2010: 86) and the different proportions of TV and newspaper ads in different campaigns resulting from parties' differing communication repertoires. To measure individualization concentrated on leadership, the proportion of ads including appearance of leaders' pictures and names will be computed, since different explanatory factors are hypothesized to have different effects of varying strength on the leader-oriented, concentrated subtype of individualization compared to general individualization.

Second, in addition to the general appearance of the ads, the content of ads and manifestos will also be investigated to assess the amount of personalization in a more fine-grained way as well as more thoroughly investigating its relationship with policy proposals: replacement or strategic promotion. Based on quasi-sentence coding, *individualization* will be measured as the proportion of quasi-sentences in campaign communication delivered by a candidate or with a candidate as the object compared to all quasi-sentences.

The same data sources are also coded to measure *privatization*. An ad's general appearance will be coded as privatized-personalized if the central character featured is a candidate or leader in a private surrounding, for example pursuing a hobby or with family. The proportion of these ads compared to all ads will then be the first measure of the level of privatization per party campaign, again differentiated by media type. On the quasi-sentence level, every quasi-sentence mentioning candidate traits will be counted as *privatized* (again differentiating total and leaders) and the proportion of privatized quasi-sentences used as the second measure indicating the

amount of privatization of a party's election campaign. An overview of the measures of personalization and its dimensions is given in Table 3.3.

3.2.2 Explanatory factors and controls

Following the operationalization of the explanandum “personalization”, I will now turn to describing and justifying the operationalization of the explanatory factors mediatization, complexity, the electoral and political system, and parties' strategic position in the electoral competition as well as party qualities and incumbency. I will start with the context factors theorized to affect all parties facing them equally and continue with the party specific factors theorized to explain variance within electoral contexts.

Since personalization is theorized to be part of a more complex phenomenon, namely modernization, I will be investigating the influence of two prominent aspects, mediatization and complexity, also associated with modernization on the use of personalization in election campaigning. As theorized above, mediatization of a campaign should lead to more personalization. I will conceptualize and measure mediatization on two levels of analysis, namely systemic mediatization by countries and mediatization experienced differently by voters in every election under investigation, relying on two different data sources: I will look at the media system models of the countries under investigation and the weighted average of survey responses from the online surveys of MEDW paralleling the party strategies data collection.

On the national macro-level, I will compare the media systems of the countries under investigation following the typology of Hallin and Mancini (2004). Their analysis of media systems suggests a more active and independent role of media in Liberal systems like Canada compared to Democratic Corporatist systems of central Europe, here Germany and Switzerland, which in turn exceed the level of media independence of the Polarized Pluralist model found in France and Spain. The more mediatized a campaign (e.g. shaped by the media as an active

player in the political communication game), the more personalized it can be expected to be conducted. On the recipients' side, the weighted mean of survey respondents' reported source of campaign information will be used as a proxy for mediatization of the campaign environment in general. I will pool the answers to survey items "Using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means no attention at all and 10 means a lot of attention, how much attention did you pay to news about the election in the following media:" for TV, newspaper, radio, and Internet, thereby operationalizing campaign mediatization on the recipients' side.

These surveys will also be used to operationalize complexity. Complexity of the political system and process, assumed to increase with modernization, evokes a need for heuristics, which can then be provided by personalization. The weighted average of survey respondents' agreement to the statement "Politics nowadays is so complicated that people like me have no chance of understanding what is going on" on a 0-10 scale will serve as the measure of complexity in a given electoral arena.

Also, the institutional framework of elections is expected to influence the level of personalization chosen by party strategists in a campaign. Therefore, according to Shugart and his colleagues (2005), electoral formulas can be arrayed by the usefulness they promise for Personal Vote-Earning Attributes (PVEA). The variable "electoral system", taking a log-modulus transformation (John & Draper, 1980) of the value of district magnitude M for open-list systems and $M^*(-1)$ for closed-list systems, will be used to operationalize this concept motivating party strategists to adopt a more personalized campaign. Where Shugart et al. (2005) used a linear measure, which gives a lot of weight to large districts, here this log-modulus transformation is used to model the expected decreasing importance of a one-seat magnitude change in a large district (e.g. from 30 to 31) compared to a small district (e.g. 1 to 2) for the relevance of PVEA for voter choice.

Besides the institutional arrangements immediately related to the electoral process, the general institutional environment of a political system has also been theorized to influence levels of

campaign personalization. In this study, I will especially concentrate on the level of presidentialization of a given electoral arena. Although I am not considering executive elections in this study, executive prerogatives, institutions, and elections have spillover effects on parallel or timely close legislative elections (Poguntke & Webb, 2005). Party strategists facing presidentialized incentive structures and parallel election campaigns for executive offices can be expected to personalize campaign communication to a greater extent and also to make use of the public and media visibility of their executive candidates beyond the campaign for executive elections. Executive leaders (if directly elected, then most often, but not always, in a single-member constituency-wide district) are not only evaluated by their policy proposals, but also by their integrity, leadership qualities, and other non-ideological qualities. They are elected to represent and act on behalf of the whole population instead of a faction and they do not have a sufficient number of colleagues to balance out individual weaknesses as parliamentary groups could do. For the sake of comparability, this present research endeavor only deals with legislative elections, but the influence of the institutional power of executives cannot be ignored. I conceptualized the influence of the executive's institutional properties on personalization of legislative campaigns via three mechanisms.

First, campaigns for legislatures determining the indirect elections of strong executives, like the German Chancellorship or the Canadian Prime Minister's office, are expected to produce quasi-presidential patterns also in legislative campaign communication. This will be operationalized by a dummy taking the value of 1 for strong national executives in Germany, Canada, and Spain, and 0 for regional and European executives (or quasi-executives in the case of the European Commission) as well as for the comparatively weak executives resulting from indirect elections in Switzerland and France. The second spillover effect is based on parallel direct executive elections. French presidential elections and Swiss regional executive elections are held parallel or in close proximity to the legislative elections analyzed here. I will operationalize the direct influence of executive elections with a dummy taking a value of 1 for parties

competing in these systems with parallel direct executive elections and 0 for the others. The establishment of TV debates of top candidates is the third facet of presidentialization covered here. Also the establishment of this institution should lead to more concentrated personalization. This will be operationalized as a dummy variable whether a debate was held or not for the constituencies under investigation and in the local language (e.g. for the 2014 European elections Juncker and Schulz held debates in German and French (=1), but not in Spanish (=0)). In total, these three dummies for strong executive, directly elected executive, and debate will be added into a presidentialization index ranging from 0 to 3. The components of this index are reasonably intercorrelated (Cronbach's Alpha: .66) and highly correlated with the index itself (direct election: .58, debate: .82, strong executive: .88).

Institutional and context factors are supposed to have the same influence on all party branches competing in the same electoral arena. Though to be able to explain differences in levels of personalization between party branches in the same arena, we have to further consider these parties' qualities influencing their propensity to personalize, which will follow in the remainder of this section.

In this study, I deliberately take advantage of the possibility to test hypotheses on the party level located below (or crossed with) the context variance affecting all parties in the same political arena equally. To explain variance between parties in elections held under the same rules, I hypothesize effects of a party's linkage strategy on the usefulness of personalization, as well as their ability to deliver personalized campaign content.

The first party quality (or here: action) to consider is directly related to the institutional factor discussed in the last chapter: Running an executive candidate. For parties running an executive candidate, the effects of institutional presidentialization should be even stronger than for parties which cannot take advantage of this setting. Therefore, I will include a dummy with the value of 1 for parties which explicitly run candidates in parallel executive elections (France, Swiss cantons) or showcase a designated candidate for an (quasi-)executive position (Spain, Canada,

Germany, Switzerland national, EU) in parliamentary elections. This dummy will then be interacted with the level of presidentialization to be able to assess these candidates' additional boost for personalization.

Considering linkage, parties with centrist policy positions are expected to rely more on personalization. Parties with unclear policy linkage appeal have to invoke alternative linkage strategies including personalization to appeal to voters. Assuming a Downsian pattern of programmatic party competition for the median voter (Downs, 1957) and in line with the cartel party hypothesis (Katz & Mair, 1995), the center of the political space is crowded by the majority of parties, which leads to difficulties in distinguishing their programmatic offers as clear alternatives by the voter. This pattern is also visible in the elections under investigation here. Therefore, centrality of a party's policy position will be indicating unclear policy linkage in this analysis.

It will be operationalized by the party's programmatic distance from the weighted mean left-right position of all relevant parties⁸ in an election, where the weight corresponds to the parties' respective electoral performance. The policy positions of the parties are derived from election manifestos via the Comparative Manifesto Project's manual coding technique (Werner et al., 2011), which assigns policy codes to quasi-sentences in election manifestos and calculates a unidimensional left-right party position from it⁹. The reasons I rely on this method of estimating party positions are threefold: They are available for all elections and parties under investigation, they provide positional estimates in a predefined space, yet they are adaptable to election- or country-specific idiosyncrasies, and they allow a fine-grained investigation of the question

⁸ Parties are relevant if they are currently represented in the legislature or came close to winning representation – parties that needed to increase their vote share by less than one percentage point or less than one third of their vote. If there are new parties that appear likely to influence the outcome of the election, they are included as well.

⁹ The Spanish manifestos for the 2014 European Parliamentary Election have been estimated using the Wordscores technique (Laver et al., 2003) with stemming and the positions of the parties in the 2009 European Parliament Elections as reference. These 2009 positions were created by the Euromanifesto research project (Braun et al., 2010) relying on a hand-coding procedure based on the CMP's technique.

whether parties replace or complement policy appeals with personalization. The MEDW research group applied the CMP coding scheme to all parties competing in the elections under investigation here. National (in part provided by the CMP research group), regional, and European manifestos were all coded manually by individuals familiar with the political context in which the manifestos were created, providing comparable data over all three levels of government. Although some alternative coding procedures for European (Braun et al., 2010), European and national (Bakker et al., 2015), and regional (Alonso et al., 2013) policy positions of parties exist or are in the making, they do vary considerably in coding schemes and time scope, so the MEDW data is to date the only readily available dataset of party positions across all three levels of government. Besides some problems of the interpretive hand coding applied in the CMP framework (see Mikhaylov et al., 2012), its advantages in validity (Pennings, 2011), that is interpreting rhetorical and stylistic vs. substantial differences, as well as the similarity in length and structure required for alternative automated content analysis are supposed to outweigh shortcomings of the CMP approach here. And since this project is based on cross-sectional data, the advantages of computational analyses like Wordscores (Laver et al., 2003) or Wordfish (Slapin & Proksch, 2008) cannot assert their alleged superiority in producing time-series data. Furthermore, an additional strand of criticism stems from CMP's alleged problems of producing internationally comparable party positions with a pre-set central point. This shortcoming, however, is mitigated by the fact that the positional data here is not used to compare party positions between countries and elections, but relative to each other when competing in the same electoral arena, a task for which CMP data is clearly fit to perform (Meyer, 2013: 36–37). Furthermore, the computation of party positions from the raw CMP codes here have also been evaluated as reasonable fits by experts for the countries in this study for left-right comparisons (France: Petry & Pennings, 2006; Canada: Cochrane, 2010; Spain, when leaving aside the regional autonomy issue, as CMP does: Alonso et al., 2015) or adapted, following Linhart and Shikano (2009) as well as Franzmann and Kaiser (2006) (Germany) and

the author's own expertise (Switzerland). Nevertheless, some scholars also argue that unidimensional policy spaces like the one assumed and computed by CMP unduly collapse a wide set of issues on one single dimension, thereby overly simplifying the political space of party competition (Kitschelt, 1994; Hooghe et al., 2002; Kriesi et al., 2008). These approaches group "new politics" issues which are not directly related to questions of economic activity, redistribution, or states vs. markets in a second dimension, gaining importance as the public's and therefore parties' policy agendas change away from classical left-right issues to new questions of identity, morality, or civil liberties. Green-Pedersen (2007) also identifies these changing patterns of issue competition, but also their non-stability over time and countries. Although issue agendas change between elections and arenas, positional competition remains relatively stable when looking at aggregated data from manifestos (van der Brug, 2001). Furthermore, the left-right heuristic is the most commonly used way for voters to place parties in competition to each other, including the surveys of MEDW used here, and therefore will serve as the framework for comparing parties' campaign efforts. Moreover, in the cases under investigation here, the problem of aggregating issues to unidimensional policy positions is further mitigated by the fact that all elections in question were the first ones in or after the global economic downturn after the crisis of 2008/2009, where economic issues and the historically and to a more limited extent still (Green-Pedersen, 2007) dominant axis of party competition were especially salient and pushed other dimensions of party competition to the back. After reviewing these arguments, the theoretical and practical advantages in validity and availability of the MEDW and CMP data justify their use for this project.

Besides personalization's usefulness in mitigating the problems of an unclear programmatic appeal directly, alternative linkage strategies can also benefit from personalization and therefore boost it in parties' campaign communication. The most relevant alternative strategy to programmatic linkage a party can employ to appeal to voters which can be expected to increase the amount of personalization in an election campaign is charismatic linkage via populism.

Populism will be operationalized by a dummy variable, assigning a value of 0 to all parties but the ones relying on a populist strategy in the arenas under investigation (=1): The Front National in France, the Schweizerische Volkspartei in Switzerland, the Alternative für Deutschland in Germany, and Podemos in Spain have been identified by scholars of party populism (Kriesi & Pappas, 2015; Arzheimer, 2015; Gómez-Reino & Llamazares, 2015) as relying on both an antagonistic notion of “the pure people” versus “the elite” and claiming to be the only political force to embody and execute an a-priori *volonté générale*, most likely combined with a strategic use of a personalistic and charismatic leadership to achieve their political goals, and therefore will be coded as populist here.

Besides the hypothesized influence of parties’ ideological standings and linkage strategies, variables measuring the ability and willingness of a party to personalize campaign content are also in order, namely incumbency (Hopmann et al., 2011), modernity, and professionalization of party organization (Holtz-Bacha, 2002: 28) as well as spillover effects of participating in executive elections (Kriesi, 2012: 831).

Since it is tightly linked to the institutional framework, the operationalization of executive spillover effects has already been covered above, so we will turn to incumbency and adaption to modern media-driven campaigning via professionalization here. First of all, incumbent candidates have certain advantages when compared to new challengers. They receive a disproportionate amount of media coverage, voters are already aware of the incumbents’ political existence, so they can evaluate them by a track record not available for the newcomers, and they are experienced with the rules of the campaigning game. Therefore I expect rational incumbents who are running for reelection to build their campaigns on these personal advantages and therefore cultivate a more personalized strategy. Also their parties will be more prone to use their publicity by personalizing the campaign. Incumbency will be operationalized as executive incumbency, whether the party under investigation was in control of the chief executive’s office and/or its leadership held government offices before the campaign. In the

case of Swiss elections for the Council of States, the sitting members' parties will be coded as incumbents.

Also, when explaining a choice for a certain strategy, in this case personalization of election campaigns, one has not only to take willingness into account, but also ability. What makes a party able to apply a personalization strategy? As mentioned before, personalization is part of a modernization development including factors like professionalization, mediatization, and also negative campaigning (Mancini & Swanson, 1996). This set of strategic behavior is highly correlated with the parties' resources, a key reinforcing factor (Gibson & Römmele, 2001). Better-funded parties can rely on more paid media space to convey their message and can also pay for production of higher-quality content, making the conveying of a favorable image of persons easier. Therefore the funds of the party, where available, will be included as an independent variable, operationalized as the campaign budget in standardized currency units per ten eligible voters. Also, the more professionalized parties are, the more personalized the campaign can be expected to be. Public relations specialists and paid communication agencies, logically linked to sufficient funds but operationalized separately, enable parties to further reap the benefits of a media-oriented, personalized campaign strategy. Staff professionalization will be operationalized as the number of full-time equivalents working for the party per one million eligible voters. Data for both financial means and staff professionalization were collected in interviews with parties' campaign managers, because reporting requirements of party finances vary widely between the electoral arenas under investigation and even when a financial report is available, it does not normally show separate budgets for campaigns. I am aware of the possibility that party managers may understate their financial resources at hand, both intentionally for strategic reasons as well as unintentionally for lack of knowledge about for example their subsections' and affiliated committee's funds, but these biases should be relatively constant for all parties in the same arena and therefore even self-declarations should give a reasonable insight into the distribution of resources between parties. To operationalize

professionalization comparatively, the two indicators for financial and staff resources are combined in an additive index of professionalization.

Table 3.4 Overview of independent variables and operationalizations

variable	operationalization	level of measurement
mediatization	mean election-related media consumption of survey respondents	election
complexity	mean survey response “politics is complicated”	election
electoral formula’s utility for PVEA	$\text{sign}(x) * \ln(x + 1)$ for $x = \text{magnitude} * 1$ for open lists and $x = \text{magnitude} * (-1)$ for closed lists	election
presidentialization	strong executive + directly elected executive + debate held in local language	election
executive competition	running a candidate for executive	party branch in election
programmatic centrism	$ \text{party position} - \text{weighted average party position} * -0.1$	party branch in election
populism	expert judgement	party branch in election
party professionalization	campaign budget / 10 voters + full-time-equivalent party employees / 1 mill. voters	party branch in election
incumbency	party in sitting government	party branch in election

Finally, to account for differences in levels of government, country-specific idiosyncrasies, and the hierarchical structure of the data, control dummies for countries and levels of government will be added to the models. Country dummies will also help in identifying macro-patterns of mediatization.

An overview of the independent variables is given in Table 3.4. Taking all these explanatory approaches into account, but only covering fewer than 150 cases, exacerbates standard frequentist statistical analysis. To alleviate bias in the estimation and comparison of different explanatory factors, a Bayesian analytical framework is in order and will be laid out in the following section.

3.3 Methods

The rich comparative data described above is the result of deliberate country and data source sampling on the side of the MEDW investigators. It allows the covering of variance in a variety of context-level as well as party-level variables. But this sampling of a limited number of interesting country cases in conjunction with the in-depth data collection of so many variables poses a problem to classical frequentist statistical inference. On the one hand, the number of cases, even when analyzing *parties*elections*, is relatively small, too small in fact for conventional statistical inference. Furthermore, the cases are also embedded in a complex hierarchical data structure. Parties competing in the same electoral arena cannot be expected to act independently of one another, and neither would it be wise to assume that sections of the same party competing in different regions or on different levels of government do not influence each other's action repertoire, party strategy, and also use of personalization. On the other hand, the deliberate, non-random sampling of the country cases and parties presented above, as well as the attempt at full coverage of the most important media sources (deliberately selected by informed country experts), is far from random and therefore does not satisfy the assumptions of frequentist statistical analysis. Therefore, these deliberate decisions made by the researchers during the data collection process have to be taken into account when modeling the data-generating process to allow generalizable and valid conclusions to be made beyond the cases engaged here.

Fortunately, Bayesian estimation techniques can handle all the data properties mentioned above which exacerbate analyses with standard regression techniques: Deliberate sampling, a medium number of cases, and nesting. Because of the non-random sampling of a medium-sized number of cases and observations here, a frequentist estimation strategy will most likely yield biased estimates for coefficients as well as confidence intervals. Bayesian regression techniques, however, do not rely on the assumption that data points for analysis are randomly sampled from the population of which to make inferences (Gill, 2008: 62). Therefore they are better suited to deal with the present set of deliberately and intentionally sampled data.

Furthermore, Bayesian regression techniques are also better equipped to handle small to medium sample sizes in combination with a large number of variables. Although the Bayesian posterior results derived from these samples are more sensitive to deliberate input of the researcher via a prior distribution, a careful choice of a uniform or uninformative prior can alleviate this problem (Gill, 2008: 65). Bayesian analysis does not run out of degrees of freedom and also does not assume independence between independent variables. Rather the opposite: A variety of interrelated independent variables helps Bayesian estimation to overcome problems of non-random sampling and missing data. When enough interrelated variables find their way into the model, assuming ignorability of data-generating processes as well as the missing data patterns can be justified (Gelman et al., 2004: 204–206). The eclectic framework of this research project, covering all theoretically relevant explanatory factors of personalization as a campaign strategy, provides the condition for assuming ignorability here.

In a frequentist framework, this problem would even be aggravated by the nested data structure with fewer than 10 cases per nesting (Stegmüller, 2013). A Bayesian approach, however, can deal with this combined problem of few cases in a cross-classified data structure. Estimating a regression model with the help of Markov chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) techniques based on simulation via Gibb's sampling instead of for example an iterative frequentist approach to fitting a complex model, which can hardly be expected to converge, produces interpretable results also for a medium number of cases and can nevertheless cope with cross-classified data structure (Browne et al., 2001).

3.3.1 On Missing Data

Furthermore, the Bayesian regression approach employed here can also account for missing data, which helps the analysis of this dataset in particular. On the side of the explanandum, not all parties have made visible campaign efforts on all channels under investigation. On the side of the explanantia, not all interviewed party strategists were willing to answer the questions in

the interview, most notably to disclose their spending, so that this uncertainty also has to be taken into account. This missing information admittedly contributes to higher uncertainty when estimating means of effects of different independent variables, but does not bias the results when modeled adequately. In addition, having many predictors, as is the case here, alleviates the problem of missing data further. So working with the present empirical data should not yield biased results, but only more uncertain ones, making the finding of substantial effects even more credible. Also, the number of cases will not be artificially and systematically diminished by listwise deletion, a feature common in frequentist ML computation techniques.

Observational studies of party behavior are more often than not constrained by data availability, as is the study conducted here. Campaign regulations like the Swiss ban on political TV advertising can institutionally limit the number of communication activities available to campaigners. And even if a wide range of communication channels are available theoretically, not all parties invest equally in all available forms of communication. Some channels are ignored because they are too costly (e.g. the production of TV spots), some are neglected intentionally for strategic reasons, for example when a party with young urban target groups concentrates its efforts on social media instead of traditional print or TV outlets. Thirdly, the data collection process can also face obstacles: Some campaign strategists are not able (or willing) to give out certain strategic information about their campaigns or outright refuse to be interviewed, leaving certain variables like campaign budgets or the amount of hired support incomplete.

This combination of institutional and behavioral factors leads to a non-ignorable amount of missing data in the investigation of personalization as a campaign strategy. Systematic patterns of missingness (conventionally named “missing not at random” or MNAR following Little (1988)) like bans on certain media outlets (here: TV ban for political advertising in Switzerland) or party-system-wide non-investment in certain forms of communication (here: absence of print advertising in France and Canada) are hard to account for, which has to lead to the exclusion of

these cases from the analysis, if one does not want to impose very strong assumptions on the mechanism of data missingness. But during recent years, the analysis of missing observational as well as experimental data due to random mechanisms of missingness, and even if the missingness is only related to measured covariates, conventionally called “missing completely at random” (MCAR) or “missing at random” (MAR) respectively (Little, 1988), has profited considerably from techniques that alleviate problems of bias and uncertainty in those patterns. While MCAR is hard to find empirically, Bayesian statistics and multiple imputation techniques have made advances that found entry in a variety of new procedures and software packages dealing with the problems of data missing at random and take their consequences seriously (van Buuren & Groothuis-Oudshoorn, 2011; Su et al., 2011; Honaker & King, 2010). These techniques’ main objective is to alleviate bias in estimation produced by the traditional default approaches of listwise deletion of incomplete cases or mean imputation (which can considerably harm the validity and reliability of data analysis), while taking the uncertainty induced by estimating a non-observed value of a variable seriously (Yucel, 2011).

To cope with the challenges posed by the missing information in the present datasets, I employ the statistical software package “mice” (van Buuren & Groothuis-Oudshoorn, 2011) for R. The chained-equation technique applied by mice is especially useful for coping with datasets that contain variables with different rates of missing information. Fortunately, the two datasets (TV advertising and newspaper advertising) as well as the combined dataset contain theoretically and empirically linked fully measured covariates, which provide a strong enough base on which multiple imputation via chained equations can be reasonably carried out. With the help of the chained equation process, values for missing observations are imputed variable by variable, starting with the lowest proportion of missing information (in this case no missing information for 23 of 44 variables, followed by 6 variables with <10% and 15 variables with >25% missing information) and informing the latter variables with the information gathered before. This

procedure is repeated 20 times¹⁰, producing 20 multiple datasets, which are analyzed separately afterwards. The results of these parallel analyses are then pooled, taking the uncertainty of the imputed dataset into account by deriving a pooled variance from within effects variance (the average variance around the point estimate of every single analysis) as well as between-variance (variance between the different point estimates) (Rubin, 2004). The pooled analyses therefore take the fundamental uncertainty of the imputed data adequately into account.

3.3.2 Estimation

Estimation will be conducted using the MCMC technique with a Gibb's sampler and noninformative priors. One advantage of Bayesian estimation techniques is the possibility to include information about previous research in the estimation process via priors. However, since the research to date about the personalization thesis is at best mixed, I will resort to noninformative priors. The previous research output at hand is not tested thoroughly enough and has not produced unequivocal support for either modernization or institutionalist hypotheses for explaining campaign personalization to justify an intervention as severe as an informative prior constitutes. In the following chapters, the hypotheses derived in chapter 2 will be put to the test analyzing the aforementioned data in a Bayesian MCMC regression framework. Results will be reported as mean posterior beta regression coefficients, credible intervals not including zero greater than 90%, 95% and 99% will be indicated.

The variables and operationalizations presented above do not only point towards the necessity for a multivariate analysis, they also inform the choice for an adequate modelling strategy. First and foremost, the values of the dependent variables found here are proportions of campaign communication and therefore logically bound between 0 and 1, which calls for a modelling

¹⁰ Here, the number of imputations $m=20$ is chosen because 20 imputations ensure a tolerable loss of power ($<1\%$) for rates of missing information up to 30% (Graham et al., 2007). The datasets here show rates of 13% (TV) and 16% (newspaper) and therefore are well below the critical threshold which would call for more imputations.

strategy suitable for dealing with those properties. Second, the observations, regardless of subgrouping (see chapters 5 to 8), show either a highly skewed or virtually univariate distribution, both far away from an approximately normal distribution required for OLS or other types of linear regression modelling. These two properties, logical bound and non-normal distribution, combined can best be modeled with a beta regression (Branscum et al., 2007) with fixed shape parameters α and $\beta=1-\alpha$ and a logistic link function.

Also, the hierarchical data structure has to be accounted for. In fact, there are four grouping factors imaginable to influence clustering of levels of personalization: country, level of government, electoral arena, and party. Actors in the same countries which are relatively closed systems of political competition and communication can be expected to have developed certain established and practiced standards in political communication also affecting the level of personalization. Second, low-salience European political communication can be expected to differ from its national counterpart, which can also be expected to differ from regional political communication systematically, both due to the mechanism of established practices described above, but also because regional politics are perceived as closer to the people. Third, branches of different parties face the same set of mediatization, electoral system, etc. when competing in the same electoral arena, leading to clustering on this level. Fourth, branches of the same party most likely influence each other's strategic repertoire not only between regions, but also between levels. In the present data structure, we therefore have to take a variety of crossed and hierarchical structuring into account. How I balanced estimation efficiency and accuracy when facing a small number of cases will therefore be outlined in the next paragraph.

Several strategies for coping with the properties of this small dataset with the aforementioned hierarchical and cross-cutting nesting have been tried and tested. Crossed-level modelling with electoral arenas and parties as grouping variables comes to mind first when thinking about the most appropriate way to model the hierarchical dependencies of the data with predictors on the election as well as the party or party-in-election level. But even in the Bayesian framework,

which is equipped with a higher ability to estimate complex models with a small number of cases, the grouping of <150 cases in >10 electoral arenas in the present data structure posed a too severe convergence problem. The results obtained from Bayesian mixed effects two-level models (both with electoral arenas or countries and levels of government as grouping variables, as well as models with random effects for electoral arenas) were highly unstable and very sensitive to MCMC starting values. When trying to account for hierarchically and empirically induced multicollinearity via a Dirichlet process prior and a variable selection prior (Curtis & Ghosh, 2011), the results became even more unstable and therefore unfit to draw robust and/or generalizable conclusions from them. Design effects were also tested as a remedy, but unduly inflated the standard errors. Therefore, I had to discard the results of these estimations and look for an alternative estimation strategy (Huang, 2014).

The analyses presented in the following chapters are based on a compromise between statistical accuracy and practical feasibility when facing a small n : Bayesian beta-regression models with a logistic link function and fixed effects for both countries and levels of government. As we will see in the descriptive overviews of the dependent variable, the mean level of personalization by party in arena differs considerably between countries as well as between European, national, and regional elections. The fixed effects allow accounting for national and government-level-specific idiosyncrasies not measured by the variables in the models and therefore safeguard against omitted variable bias on these levels, including decentralization or salience. At the same time, these fixed effects of country and government level alleviate the problems of clustering of parties in electoral arenas without rendering the variance of the predictors within and between the electoral arenas unusable. All predictor variables are in fact measured on the two lowest levels – party and electoral arena – so including fixed effects for the higher-order groupings of country and level of government does not interfere with these variables' predictive power.

To take additional advantage of the Bayesian estimation framework, I will run two analyses to explain each type of personalization defined above. First, I will look at the complete cases for which all necessary data is provided. In a second step, I will compare the results from these complete-case analyses with results from an analysis of datasets completed by multiple imputations. With those, I can assess whether the results of the complete case analysis are not only coincidental products of listwise deletion.

4. Patterns of Personalization

Personalization in politics and election campaigns has been conceptualized on two different dimensions. First, a distinction is made between the general appearance or advertising of people vs. institutions or parties labeled general personalization, and the concentration on the leading personnel of a party, labeled concentrated or leadership personalization. In the following chapters, I will analyze these two facets of campaign personalization separately. Although leadership personalization is a subset of general personalization, it is necessary to differentiate these concepts, not least to differentiate between direct effects of leadership races on general personalization levels, and the potential coattail- or halo-effects of these races also affecting the personalization of non-leadership campaigns. Do legislative campaigns in presidentialized systems, for example, show high personalization because of the chief executive candidates' dominance, or does the "winner take all"-principle of these systems also influence lower-rank candidacies' personalization strategy? To answer these questions, Chapter 5 and 7 will deal with general personalization, chapters 6 and 8 with leadership personalization.

A second conceptual dimension of personalization differentiates between the focus on persons in general, called individualization, and a concentration on their private traits, called privatization. This differentiation is in order, because the mechanisms of complexity reduction, media suitability and comparative advantage should theoretically influence these different types to varying extents. For example: Although probably not absent in explaining individualization, media-related explanatory factors should play a larger role in explaining privatization due to modern media's human-interest focus in campaign coverage. Electoral systems however can be expected to contribute more to explaining individualization, because they shape competition patterns and the need for unique selling point enhancement by personalization, which can be provided by individualization alone. For a comprehensive investigation, I will also analyze these two facets of personalization separately in the following chapters, dealing with general

and leadership individualization in chapters 5 and 6 respectively, and with privatization in chapters 7 and 8. In the remainder of this chapter, I will present the mean levels of the types of personalization discussed above by countries and levels of government to get a first intuition of their variance and to justify the subsequent analyses.

4.1 Patterns of Individualization

First of all, I will look at the most unspecific form of political personalization: general individualization. When do parties rely on picturing or mentioning political personnel in campaign communication in general? As theorized above, they should do so, if they expect gains in their unique selling point, their ads' media suitability and their heuristic appeal from personalization. This can be achieved via two techniques, which I will investigate separately. The first technique, individualizing the general appearance of an ad called "individualized framing" of campaign communication is measured by the proportion of campaign ads picturing or explicitly mentioning a political person as the main protagonist. This rather superficial technique is complemented by a second, more fine-grained one called "content individualization". The content of an advertisement can be individualized by attributing it to a person. This is captured here in the quasi-sentence based measurement, where individualization is operationalized as the proportion of statements in campaign communication linked to a person (actor or object of a quasi-sentence). To control for TV's theoretically higher inherent suitability for personalization, I will investigate the personalization of content and framing separately for newspaper and TV advertisements.

Differences in individualization levels between TV and newspaper advertisement are depicted in Figure 4.1. In general we can observe that individualization is a widespread quality of political advertising. More than half of campaign communication, up to >70% in newspaper advertising content, is individualized. We therefore can conclude that we do not deal with a trivial or negligible phenomenon. Individualization obviously is a practicable and promising

way of obtaining citizen support for the majority of parties under investigation here. However, contrary to the expectation that TV is the medium most suitable for personalized campaign communication, we see lower levels of individualization both in TV framing as well as content when comparing it to the respective levels in newspaper advertising. These differences are visible both in general individualization as well as in leadership individualization. Another difference between TV and newspaper individualization is visible in comparing framing and content of the respective outlets. Both general individualization and the proportion of leadership individualization are higher in TV framing than in TV content. In newspapers, we see the opposite. This observation is more in line with the theoretical notion of TV communication being more superficial and therefore suitable for personalized framing as image generator than newspaper advertising.

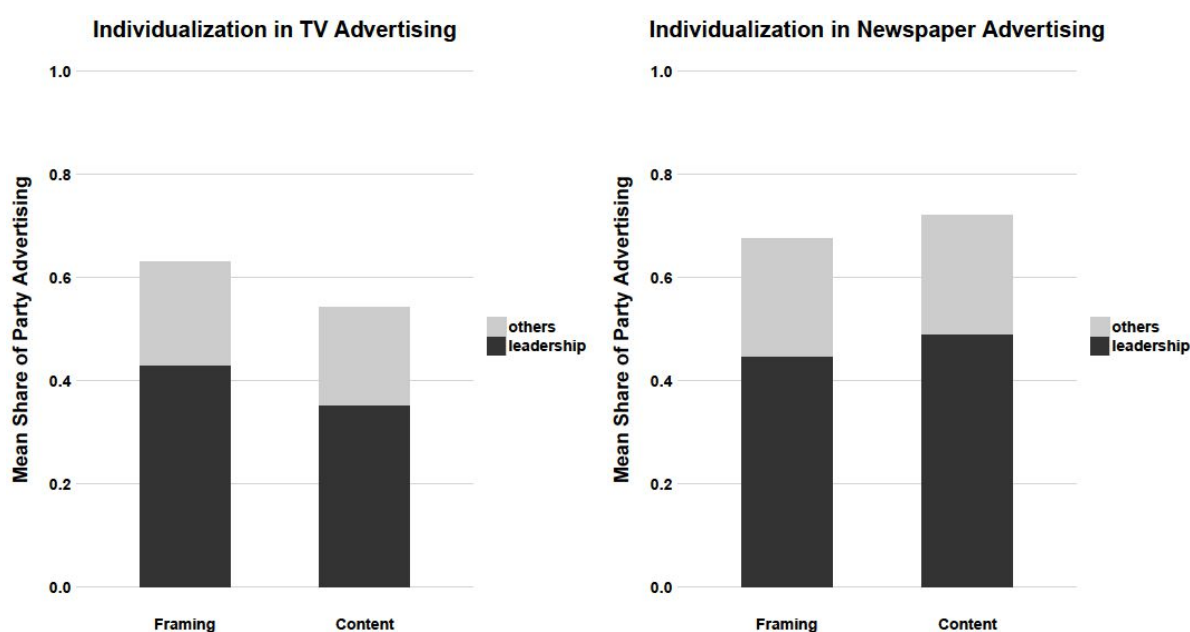


Figure 4.1 Mean levels of campaign individualization in TV and newspaper advertising

This aggregation of all party campaign communication gives a first insight into the patterns of personalization, but as we are interested in variation beyond framing and content or media outlets, we disaggregate the data in Figure 4.1 for a country comparison in Figure 4.2¹¹.

At a first glance the high levels of mean general individualization in Canadian and French TV advertisement are most apparent. The mean Canadian and French party communication on TV shows individualization in around 90% of the ads and around 80% of the campaign content. Spain and Germany in comparison show lower levels of general individualization, but higher proportions of leadership individualization both in TV framing and content. The most obvious potential explanatory difference between Canada/France and Germany/Spain is the electoral system. The former countries' majoritarian systems with single-member districts can be expected to produce higher levels of individualization than the PR-systems of the latter.

However, the high proportions of leadership individualization in Germany and Spain are not as easy to explain institutionally. Both countries' chief executives on the national and regional level indeed concentrate a high amount of power in their offices, but this also holds true for the Premiers of Ontario and Quebec. This gives room for additional explanatory value to be expected from non-institutional factors like mediatization (Canada's has a liberal media system with a higher expected personalization, compared to France's and Spain's polarized-pluralist and Germany's democratic-corporatist systems) and party competition and qualities. The individualization in newspaper advertisements shows another pattern. Here, Spain leads the board with an astoundingly high level of individualization, exclusively concentrated on leadership (averaging over regional, national and European elections!). The German newspaper pattern resembles the respective low TV-values, and the Swiss mean newspaper framing and content individualization levels take a middle ground, nearly evenly distributed between leaders

¹¹ In Switzerland, political TV advertisement is banned. Therefore, TV data is only available for France, Germany, Spain and Canada. Newspaper data is only available for Germany, Spain and Switzerland, because the French and Canadian party sections under investigation made no campaign effort in newspapers.

and other political persons. Whether those differences are due to country-specific idiosyncrasies or can be explained systematically will be the question to answer in chapters 5 and 6.

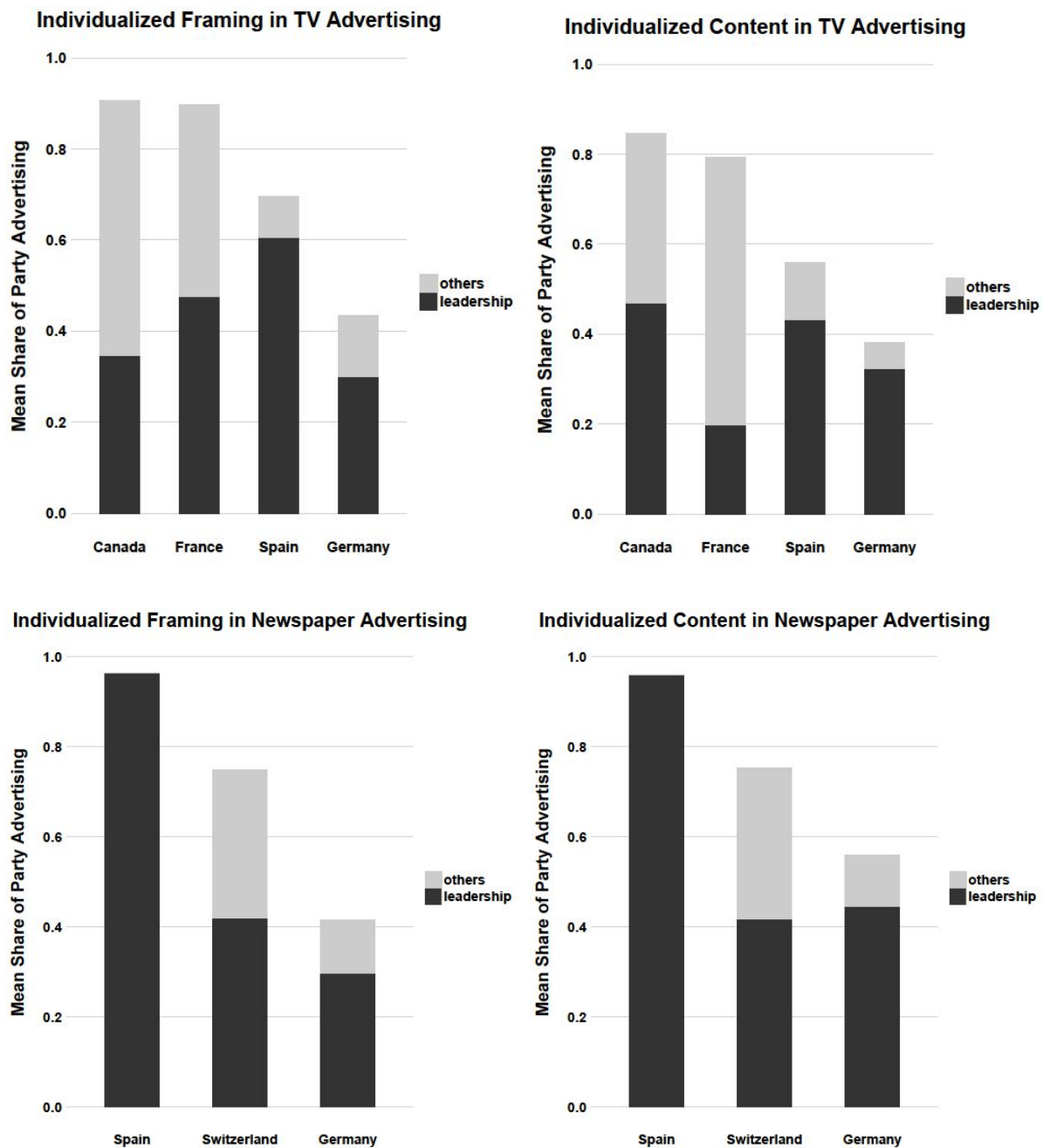


Figure 4.2 Mean levels of campaign individualization in TV and newspaper advertising by country

Splitting the sample across levels of government also shows variation in mean individualization levels. Theoretically, three arguments can be made when explaining personalization differences between levels of government: First, one could expect the proportion of personalized campaign

communication to be higher, the “closer” the political arena is to the voters. In regional politics, where interpersonal contact and personal acquaintance with candidates is more likely than in national or even European politics, personalization based on face recognition heuristics or acquaintance should be more promising for attracting voter support than on the more distant levels of government. On the other hand, a reverse argument can be made about mediatization. If one sees personalization first and foremost as a facet of modernization and mediatization of political communication, then a higher level of media personalization should be expected with greater distance of an electoral arena to the voter. The further away the level of government from the voters, the more they have to rely on media(tized) information when making up their mind about their electoral choice, and therefore parties and candidates should invest more resources in personalization as a campaign strategy supported by the media instead of for example canvassing or rallies in European and national elections, than in regional elections. The establishment of Europe-wide top candidates by the EP’s parliamentary groups in 2014 can be seen as an indicator for that notion.

Finally, one can also make a salience argument related to the literature on second-order elections (Reif & Schmitt, 1980). There, European, and to some extent also regional, elections (Burkhart, 2005) have been conceptualized as subordinate to national elections, which shows in lower salience, lower participation rates, and a tendency to base the electoral choice not (only) on European and regional topics at hand, but also taking those elections as quasi-referenda or signals of disapproval with the national government. Taking this argument a step further, one could therefore also expect the national elections to be most personalized, because political celebrities were more willing to engage in elections that matter and in which they can ensure to be evaluated on the level of government at hand and not based on the performance of their party in unrelated arenas or potentially unpopular party comrades.

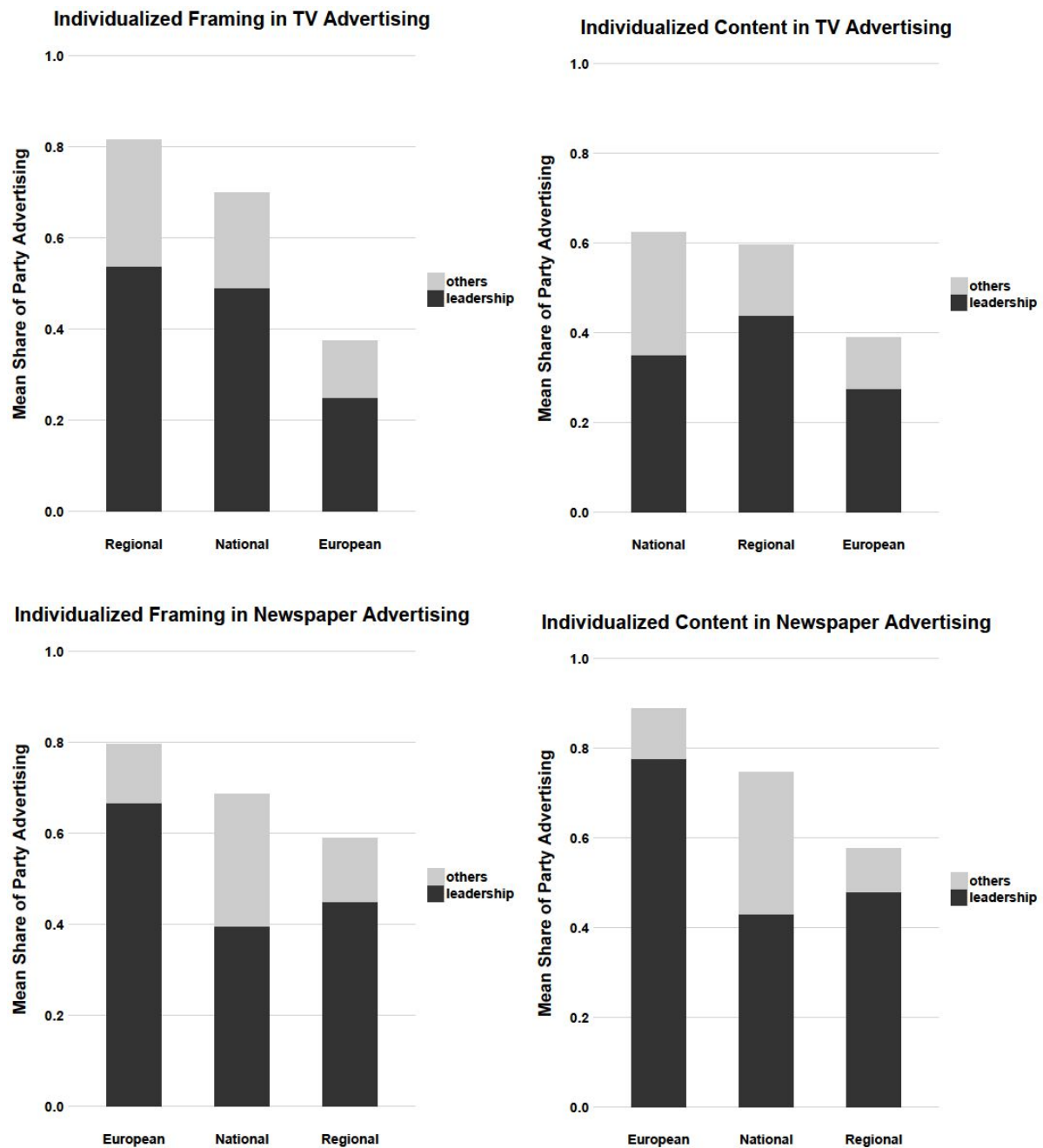


Figure 4.3 Mean levels of campaign individualization in TV and newspaper advertising by levels of government

The empirical patterns shown in Figure 4.3, however, are too diverse to unequivocally corroborate any one of the arguments presented above. The individualized framing in TV advertising shows a pattern that can be attributed to the “closeness to the people”-argument, a steady increase of mean levels of individualization both general and leadership, from a mediocre European value to over 80% in regional elections. The generally individualized TV

content rather shows a second-order pattern, with the highest mean value for national elections, followed by regional and European campaigns. The individualized leadership content level resembles the steady increase from European to regional seen in TV framing. Finally, the newspaper framing as well as content means of general individualized campaigns point towards the mediatization argument. The proportion of individualized campaign framing and content in newspapers continuously decreases with closeness to the people, supporting the view that higher (forced) reliance on mediatized communication by voters and parties also leads to higher levels of individualization. However, the inverse second-order pattern of leadership individualization in newspapers, with the lowest mean levels of framing and content at the national level, cannot be explained by any of the three suggested arguments above.

4.2 Patterns of Privatization

The second variety of personalization, privatization, understood here as presenting politicians in a private, non-political environment or addresses their personal traits in advertising content can be observed remarkably less in political advertising than individualization covered above. Although the average party section in an election covered here indeed uses privatized framing in still more than 50% of TV advertising, a value close to the average proportion of individualization, however only 20% of the average party section's TV advertising content is privatized, e.g. advertises politician's personal skills, trustworthiness or friendliness. This is in stark contrast to over 50% individualized content on average in parties' TV advertising campaigns. The contrast is even stronger when looking at newspapers: Less than 10% of the average party section's newspaper advertisements are framed in a privatized fashion, for example showing a politician pursuing a hobby, with family, or in nature, outside of parliament or government buildings. If politicians are depicted at all (and they are in >60% of average parties' newspaper advertisements, see Figure 4.1), they are either featured as politicians or, even more commonly, in front of a neutral background or photo screen. The newspaper

advertising's content on average deals with politician's traits in roughly 40% of cases, which is not as much as the 70% individualization in the same venue, but way above the newspaper ad's privatized framing's proportion of below 10%. Also, contrary to the expectation, privatization does not seem to be generally concentrated on leadership. Where individualization shows a proportion of leadership-concentration of roughly two thirds of the whole amount of general individualization, leadership-concentrated privatization only accounts for less than half of all privatization regardless of medium. Again, comparing TV and newspaper's privatization patterns suggests that privatization is more suitable for TV framing than TV content, probably due to the wider and less sophisticated target audience, whereas newspaper framing seems to be more neutral and in return newspaper content more prone to privatization.

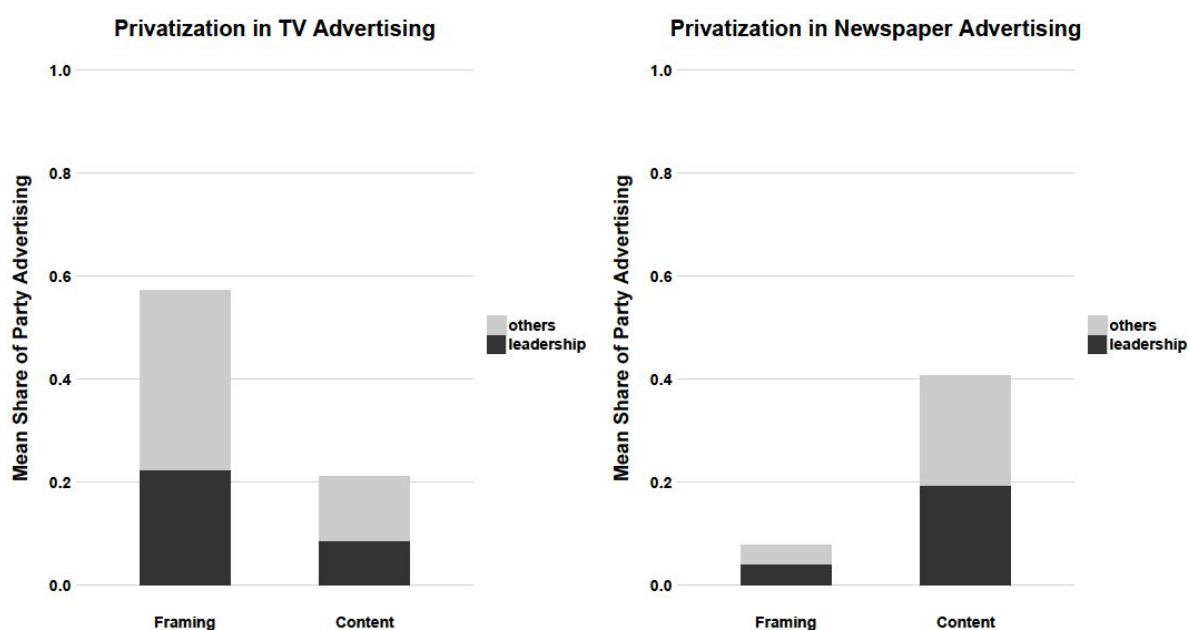


Figure 4.4 Mean levels of campaign privatization in TV and newspaper advertising

Figure 4.5 shows the patterns of privatization per country. Again, we see stark differences in TV privatization. Canada shows the lowest average level of privatization both depicting leadership and other candidates. France and Germany take a middle ground with above 50% of TV campaign communication framed as privatized-personalized, and in Spain over three quarters of TV advertising is privatized. Modernization theorists, who would attribute these

national differences to media systems, cannot see their theses supported by this picture, because Canada's liberal media system should produce a much higher proportion of privatization than the other countries. There have to be other factors at work. Privatized content of political TV advertisement is very uncommon in the sample observed here. Only Germany shows over one fifth of content dealing with politicians' traits and, as in the overall picture of Figure 4.4, all countries show less privatized content concentrated on leadership than on other candidates. Privatized framing also is very rare in newspaper advertising. German parties do not at all employ this communication strategy and Spanish parties limit it to party leadership. In Switzerland, general as well as leadership privatization framing is also very rarely used in newspaper advertising. Privatized content however is relatively popular in Switzerland. More than half of the average Swiss party's campaign communication shows privatized content in newspaper ads, compared to below one third in Germany and none in Spain.

Looking at the overall patterns depicted in Figure 4.5, one finds partial evidence for TV's higher suitability especially for privatized human-interest advertising. The levels of privatized framing are consistently higher on TV than in newspapers, also in the two country cases directly comparable because of data availability in both media outlets, Germany and Spain. Also the privatized image generating process via superficial and visual framing seems to work better on TV, a medium especially associated with pictures, than privatizing content. However, the Swiss case does only partially support this notion. One could argue, that because of the ban of political TV advertising in Switzerland, privatization should there be expressed in the substitute newspaper advertisings, but this only holds for content. Even when subscribing to the "better suitability of TV because of picture dominance"-argument, the very low Swiss amount of personalized framing in newspaper advertising cannot be easily explained by this country comparison alone.

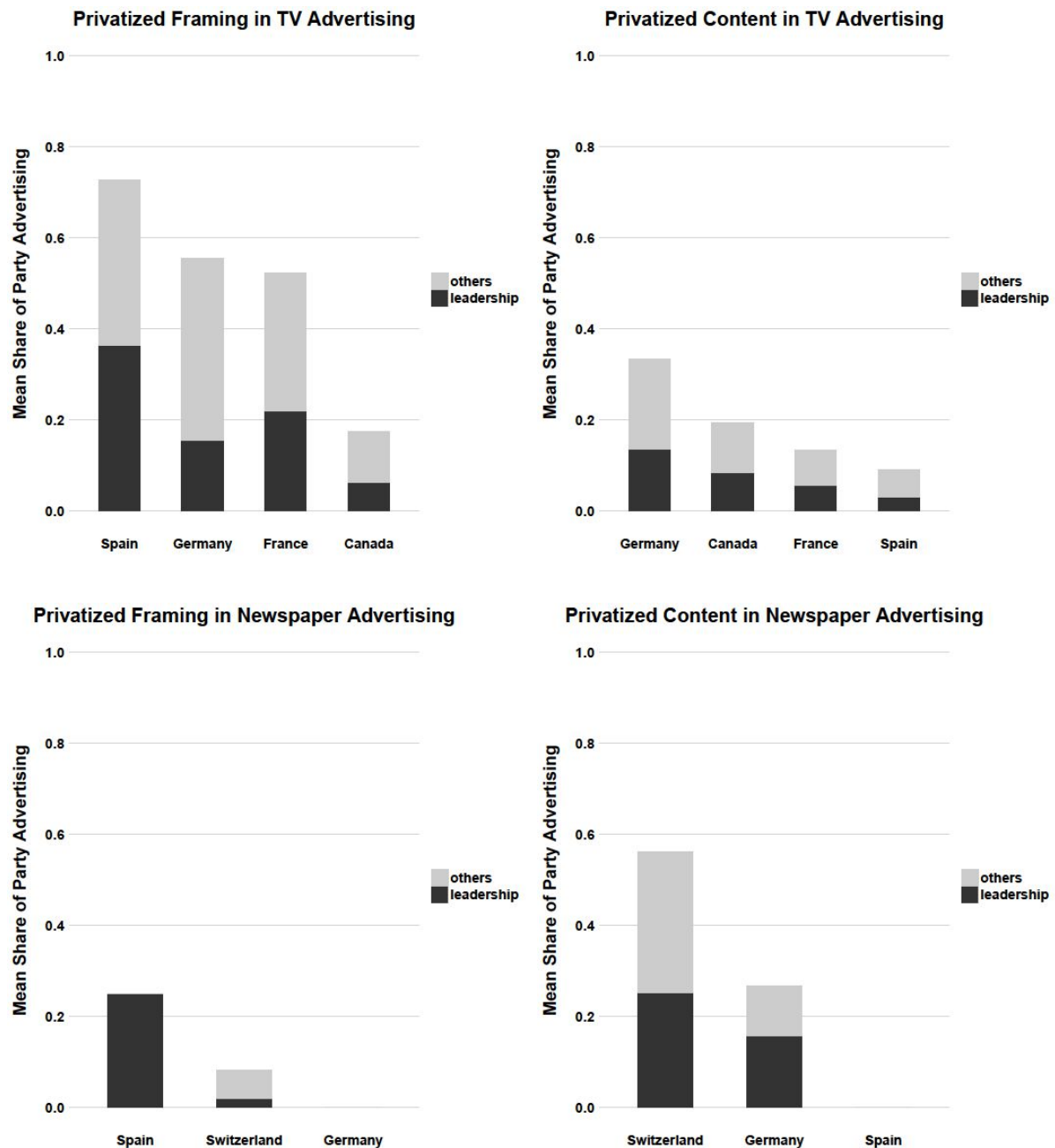


Figure 4.5 Mean levels of campaign privatization in TV and newspaper advertising by country

As in the patterns of individualization differentiated between levels of government in Figure 4.3, also privatization in Figure 4.6 shows no clear tendency consistent with one of the three expectations listed above. Closeness to the people, mediatization or a second-order approach are in fact all supported by one of the patterns depicting privatization. The privatized framing pattern on TV seems to support the mediatization approach. A decrease from a very high

proportion (>80%) in European elections, followed by a medium level (just above 50%) in national elections and under 40% in regional elections is consistent with the expectation, that privatization should be more visible, the more voters have to rely on mediatized information about candidates. The less support candidates can gather by interpersonal contact (European < national < regional), the more personalization via media is expected by the mediatization argument. However, the privatization of TV advertising content shows a reverse pattern, supporting the notion of “closeness to the people” leading to more personalization. If personalization’s utility is attributed to its capability of activating existing interpersonal ties of candidates and voters, privatization in TV ads’ content showing the expected increase from European elections which do not provide the potential for interpersonal ties, followed by only a slight increase to the national level and the highest value on the regional level is the logical consequence. The second-order argument, where salience and perceived importance of national elections vis-à-vis European and regional ones should lead to national advertisement having the highest proportion of privatization. This pattern can be observed for privatized newspaper content, where national ads lead the board followed by regional and European communication efforts. The privatized framing patterns in newspaper advertisement are not expected by any of these approaches. The national level shows the lowest average proportion of privatized newspaper content followed by exclusively non-leadership privatization in regional and exclusively leadership centered privatization in European elections.

All in all we can again conclude that macroscopic inspection of the levels of privatization does not show an overarching pattern to be easily explained by macroscopic theories of national or government level differences.

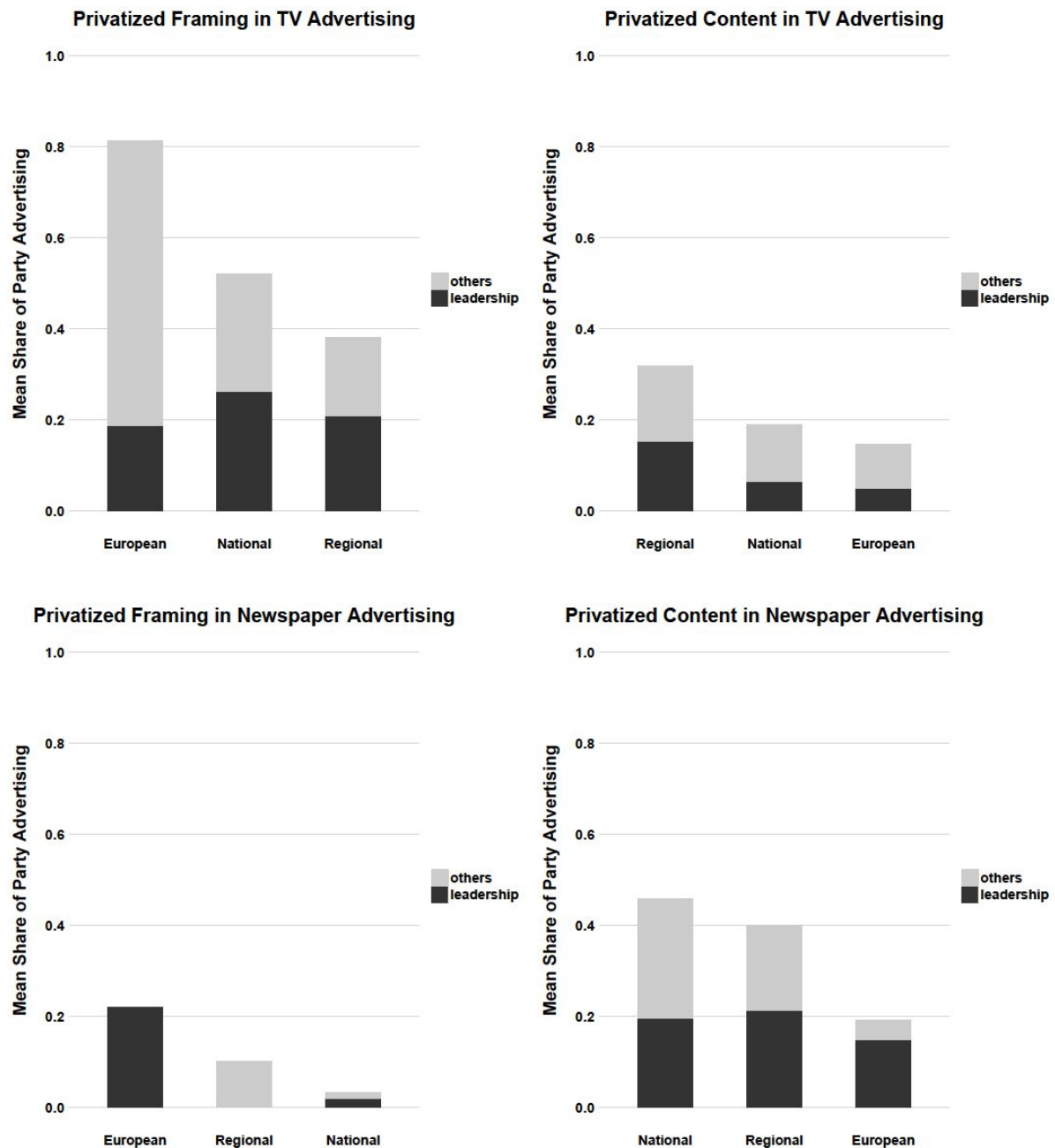


Figure 4.6 Mean levels of campaign privatization in TV and newspaper advertising by levels of government

4.3 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I presented the aggregate levels of personalized framing and content of TV and newspaper advertising. Although differences are evident between media outlets, countries, levels of government as well as framing and content, hardly any systematic general tendencies are visible throughout the given levels of personalization. Neither have country cases such as

Canada with a liberal media system, nor France with a presidential institutional architecture, both paired with small district magnitudes, shown systematically higher levels of personalization than the other country cases in the sample. Only Switzerland's open list systems with medium sized district magnitudes has shown consistently higher levels of personalization than Germany and higher levels of non-leadership personalization than Spain. Comparing patterns of personalization between levels of government were generally inconclusive. No systematic approach discussed above, mediatization, closeness to the voters or second-order arguments could be traced consistently in the respective figures.

So in general, these split sample means comparisons can only be a first approximation to an analysis of personalization in election campaigns. Since the subgroups by country as well as by level of government are far from balanced (see Table 3.1 in chapter 3), single or groups of influential cases, which are not evenly distributed, could also be responsible for the patterns here or cover systematic variation between groups of cases. Nevertheless, the clear differences between groups in nearly all respective dimensions under scrutiny has shown the necessity to analyze the patterns of campaign personalization in a multivariate way, taking the country- and levels of government-groupings seriously. How the within-group distributions look and how to explain them will be the aim of the next chapters.

5. Explaining General Individualization

The patterns of personalization depicted in the last chapter point towards the verdict that a simple cross-national or cross-level comparison of personalization does not yield systematic variation that can be attributed to national or level-specific factors alone. So I have to assess the influence of election-level and partisan explanatory factors on personalization by a more differentiated approach. It will be differentiated by types of personalization, covering general individualization in this chapter, leadership individualization in chapter 6, general privatization in chapter 7, and leadership privatization in chapter 8. These tests will all follow a common structure. First, I will take a look at the distribution of the different types of personalization beyond the overview presented in chapter 4 and justify the following analysis of Bayesian beta regression coefficients. After that, I will perform a complete case analysis of all party sections under investigation which produced measurable data for the independent and dependent variables in question. Third, I will check the robustness of the findings of the complete-case analysis with the help of multiply imputed data for all relevant parties running in the elections under investigation and conclude on the basis of these analyses if the hypotheses developed in chapter 2 can be held up.

5.1 Distributions of General Individualization

Looking at the distribution of individualization levels within our sample depicted in Figure 5.1, we observe that a differentiation of explanations is in order. Personalization in the form of general individualization is by no means a strategy employed by all parties. However, the vast majority of parties either personalize (nearly) all or (nearly) none of their campaign content, be it via TV or newspaper advertising. When looking at TV advertising, the mean level of general individualization is close to two thirds for framing and just above half for content. With TV being a visual medium, TV spots being scarce, and the measurement of framing a cruder one than the differentiated counting of quasi-sentences for personalized content, this difference is

not surprising. Showing or mentioning a political person in an ad is already enough to classify its framing as 100% personalized, whereas quasi-sentences by off-voices and not directly stated by candidates do already technically drop the proportion of content personalization, even if a candidate is the main character of an ad.

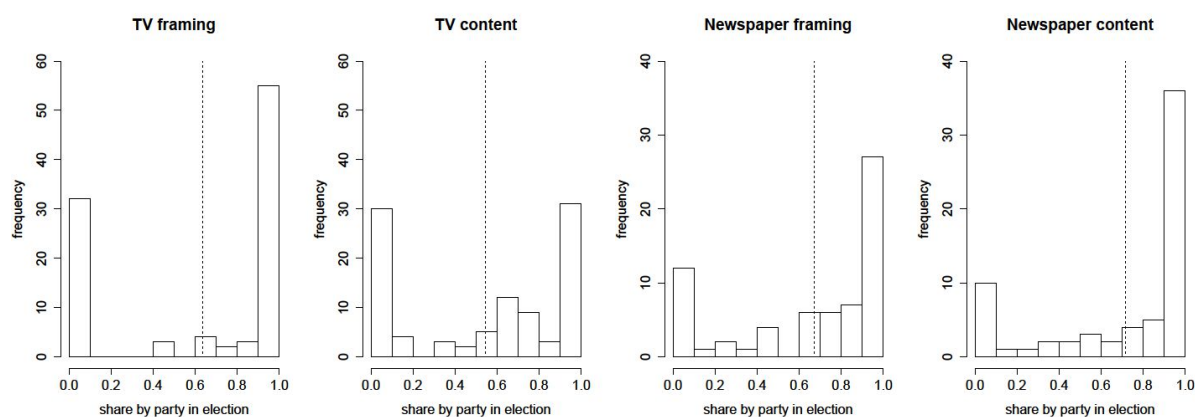


Figure 5.1 Distributions of general individualization in TV and newspaper advertising
Note: Means as dashed lines

In newspapers, the figures do not look substantially different with regards to distribution, but the mean values show higher levels in both framing and content (both exceed two thirds), and the content levels are even higher than the framing levels. This could be due to the large influence of Swiss cases in the sample. Being not allowed to advertise on TV, Swiss political parties resort to extensive newspaper advertising campaigns, including personalized framing and content. And in general, since the entry hurdles for newspaper advertisements are generally lower than for TV both in terms of prices and regulation, the party leaderships and strategy planners have less control over the content of newspaper advertisements and individual candidates can use their own campaign budget to promote their candidacy independently from the party leadership, concentrating attention on their own personae. The distributions of generally individualized campaign framing and content, however, resemble the pattern found in TV framing. A large majority of party sections under investigation individualize either (nearly) all or (nearly) none of their campaign communication. Consequently, as shown in

chapter 4, a differentiated view of campaign individualization level distribution by countries is in order.

When comparing the mean levels of individualization in TV campaign advertising between countries in Figure 5.2, we can observe considerable variation. While Canada and France show mean individualization levels of roughly 90% in campaign framing and 80% in campaign content, Spain with 70% in framing and below 60% in content as well as Germany with framing and content just around 40% clearly show lower levels. Although from this overview we cannot see directly if these differences are due to institutional factors, media systems, or patterns of party competition, the widespread distribution of party cases still clearly show the necessity for multivariate analysis considering and unraveling these countries' "packages" of determinants for personalization as well as controlling for incidental idiosyncrasies. Whether for example Canada's and France's small average district magnitude of 1 is the driving factor, or these countries' media systems, or their high degree of presidentialization, or other country-specific idiosyncrasies, has to and will be tested in the following sections of this chapter.

The distribution of individualization in TV advertisement campaigns within countries shows a similar concentration of cases at the extremes as observed in the pooled distributions in Figure 5.1. When looking at the variation in general individualization within the countries under investigation, the majority of campaigns either fully or never individualize their TV campaign communication framing. The distribution of TV campaign content is not as extreme, but, with the exception of Spain, fully or never individualized campaign communication content dominates the scene. Nevertheless, we can see systematic differences when looking more closely at the distribution of general individualization within countries, which are most visible in the relative number of party cases which fully or not at all individualize their campaign communication: In France and Canada individualizing most TV advertisement framing and content is the strategy of choice for a majority or plurality of parties, respectively. In these countries, as seen in the means analysis, general individualization looks like the regular way to

go in an election campaign, which has been established as a part of parties' shared standard strategic repertoire with only minor deviance. This is not the case for Spain and Germany. Spain shows different patterns for framing, where a majority of parties which frame (nearly) all of their TV campaign communication in an individualized way face roughly one third not individualizing their TV ads' framing at all. This differentiation in individualization in Spain is even more evenly distributed when it comes to content. About one quarter of party branches individualize (nearly) all of their campaign communication content, another quarter individualizes none, another quarter personalizes roughly two thirds of the content, and another quarter is spread out over 30 to 90% individualization. Therefore we can tell that general individualization is not as systematically rooted in Spain as in France or Canada. The German distribution looks even less in favor of campaign individualization. However, it also shows the familiar split with the vast majority of parties going with an "all or nothing" approach to individualization. Germany though is the only country in which the "nothing" group outnumbers the "all" group, both in framing and in content, but the middle grounds are similarly deserted as in the other countries. As with Spain, the German parties are obviously motivated by factors other than the ones tied to their national context to use individualized campaigning or not.

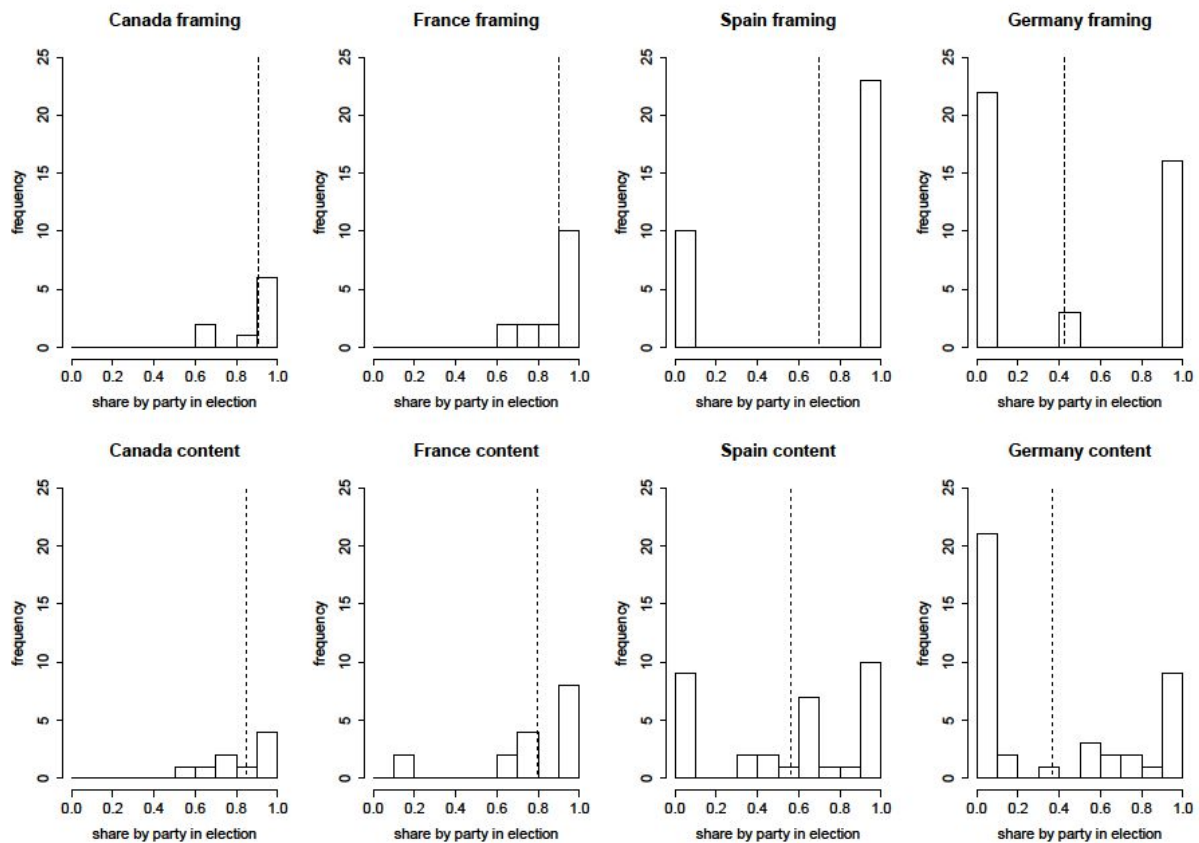


Figure 5.2 Distributions of general individualization in TV advertising; framing and content by countries

Note: Means as dashed lines

Similar patterns can be observed in the distributions of individualization of newspaper advertisements in Figure 5.3. Stark differences between country means (>90% in Spain, 75% in Switzerland, and just over 40% in German framing and <60% in German content) as well as wide distributions of individualization levels within countries also support the view that country-specific as well as electoral and partisan factors have to be considered simultaneously for explaining levels of personalization. Comparing TV and newspaper advertisements in Spain shows remarkable differences, whereas the data for Germany are similarly distributed. However, the Spanish newspaper distributions are based on merely 8 cases and therefore have to be taken with caution. A more comprehensive picture will be available in the later analysis of multiply imputed data.

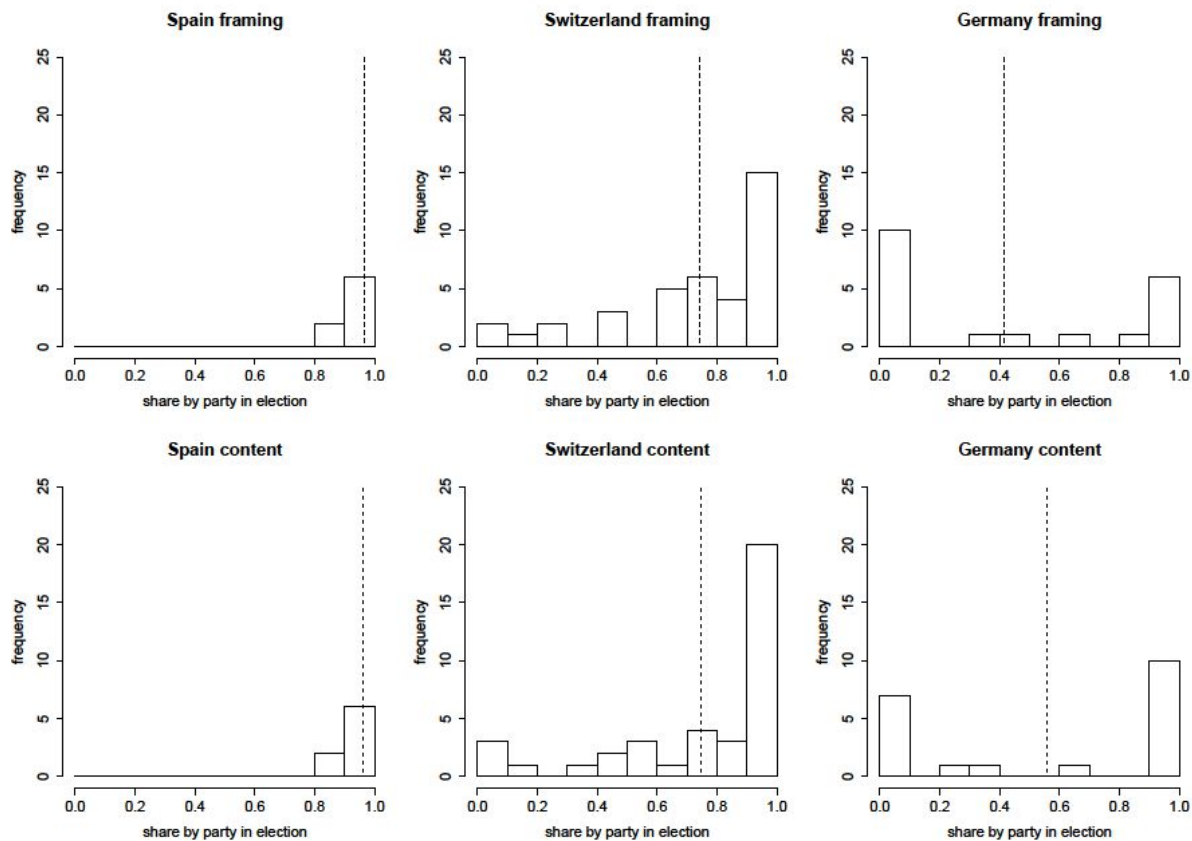


Figure 5.3 Distributions of general individualization in newspaper advertising; framing and content by countries
 Note: means as dashed lines

The level of personalization not only varies between countries. Different levels of government – the European, the national, and the regional – can also be expected to elicit varying degrees of individualization. The differences in mean individualization have been theoretically attributed to three potential explanations (see chapter 4): A need for mediatization, leading to an increase in personalization the more distant an electoral arena from the voter; closeness to the people, expecting increasing personalization with decreasing distance of voter to arena; and a second-order argument expecting higher personalization with higher importance and salience of the national vote vs. the European or regional vote.

When looking at the means, we do not find unequivocal support for either of these arguments. At most the figures support the second-order argument with the national individualization levels always at the top or only closely trailing the highest mean value (here: regional). When looking at the distributions within groups, we see the familiar pattern: A vast majority of parties

individualize their campaign communication either fully or not at all. The only notable exceptions are the content of TV advertising and the framing of newspaper advertising in regional elections, which both show an approximately uniform distribution. From this we can conclude that the level of government, as well as the national context, indeed has an influence on the mean level of individualization in campaign communication, but does not predetermine the individual parties' campaign strategy chosen in these respective types of arenas. In the following, I will systematically analyze the factors differentiating parties within countries and levels of government and test the hypotheses derived in chapter 2 employing the Bayesian beta regression approach with fixed effects described in chapter 3.

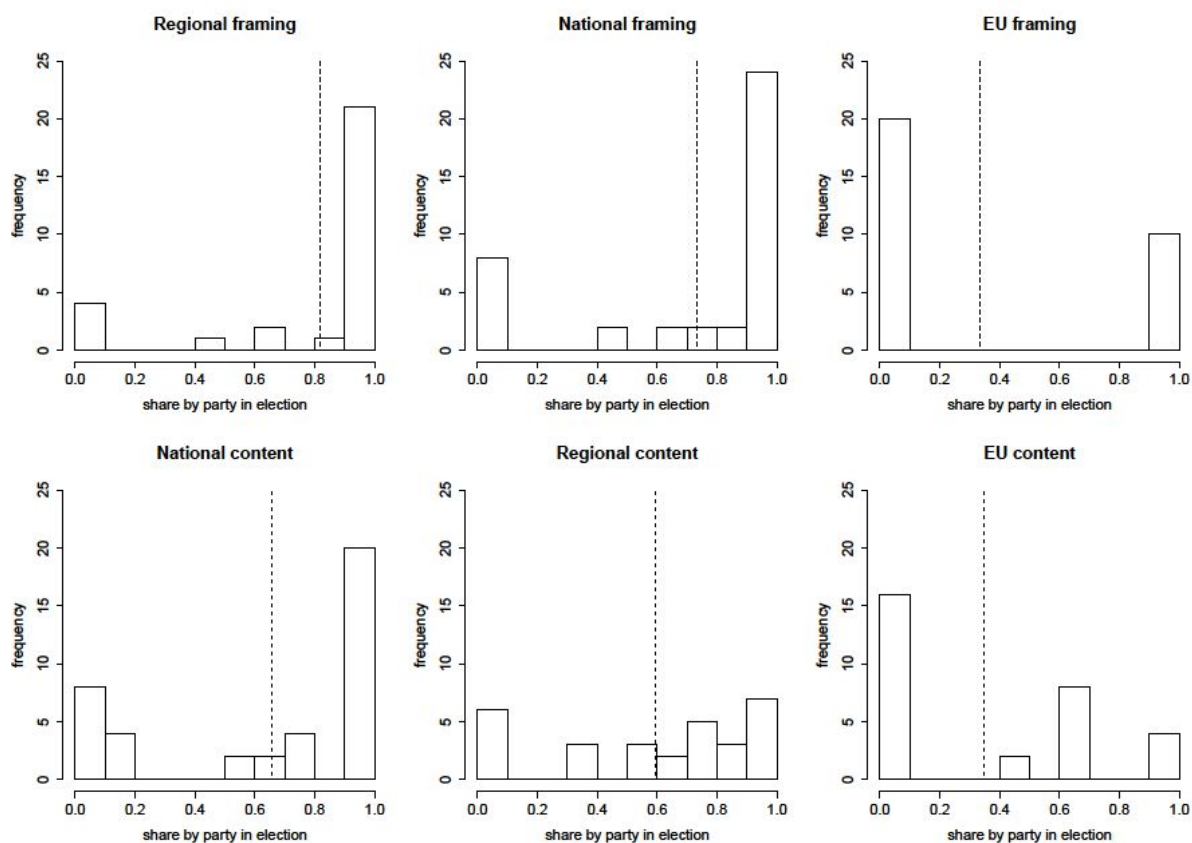


Figure 5.4 Distributions of general individualization in TV advertising; framing and content by levels of government
Note: Means as dashed lines

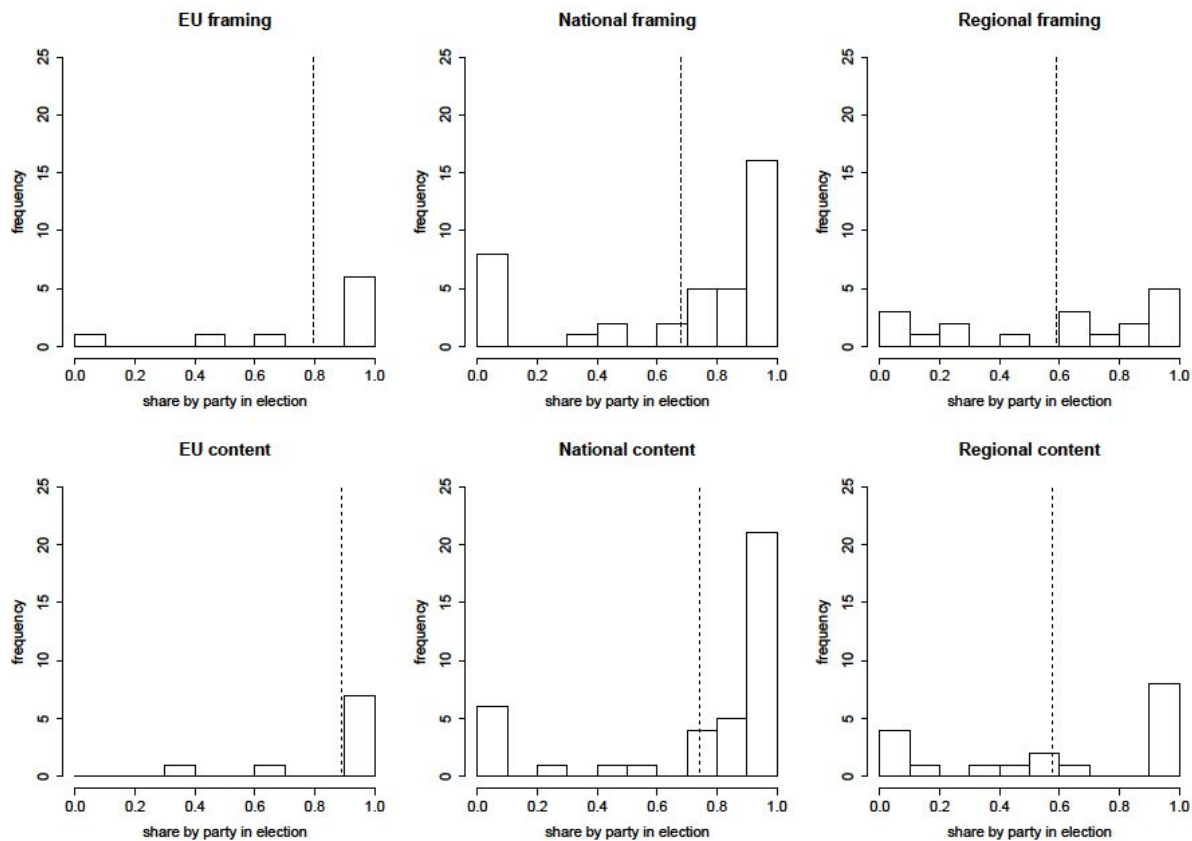


Figure 5.5 Distributions of general individualization in newspaper advertising; framing and content by levels of government
Note: Means as dashed lines

5.2 Complete Case Analysis of General Individualization

Earlier in this thesis, I theorized three mechanisms for explaining personalization in campaign communication: media suitability, heuristics, and adding to the unique selling point of a candidacy. Although these three mechanisms can be expected to influence all types of personalization, I still expect differences in explanatory power with respect to different dimensions of personalization. General individualization, which is the main explanandum covered in this chapter, is a rather superficial and crude measure of personalization. It is operationalized merely as a presence or absence of political personae in advertising's framing or content and does not include a qualification like privatization does. Hence, I expect the more mechanical motivations for personalization, which are the need for heuristics and enhancement of the unique selling point, to play a larger role in explaining variance in individualization. The

media-related factors should not be as decisive as institutions or party competition patterns. This notion will in part be confirmed by the analyses in the remainder of this chapter.

The distributions of individualization within countries and levels of government observed in the previous section indicate that multivariate analysis of personalization is in order. For reasons of data scarcity, I will pursue this endeavor in two steps. First, I will analyze campaign communication of the parties, which produced observable data on all relevant explanatory and independent variables. This should give us a first intuition of the predictive power of the variables and concepts theorized above to influence personalization. In a second step in section 5.3, I will test the robustness of these findings with the help of multiple imputation analyses.

In Table 5.1, I present the results of the complete case analysis of 143 party sections' amount of individualization in their campaign strategy. The simultaneous influence of all theorized election-level and party-level variables on general individualization of TV and newspaper advertising's framing and content are tested here in a Bayesian beta regression framework. To prevent omitted variable bias and to control for national, government-level or media-specific idiosyncrasies, appropriate control variables have been added. The results have been obtained by MCMC analyses of 5 chains, each with 10,000 iterations, with the first 1000 iterations discarded as burn-in. The coefficients presented are the mean posterior estimates of each parameter with standard deviations in parentheses. The parameters of this logit-linked regression are logged odds ratios, which complicates the immediate interpretation, since the influence of each variable depends on values of the others. To ease interpretation, I centered the continuous predictors at their means; the non-centered dummy variables varying between 0 and 1 are indicated with a (d).

What is immediately visible from a comparison of columns 1 and 2 of regression Table 5.1 is the fact that in the pooled analyses, the set of significant explanatory variables for general individualization in advertising does not differ much between framing and content. Both are explained best by an interplay of election-level and party-level factors. Complexity (election-

level) and the interaction of institutional presidentialization (election-level) with running an executive candidate (party-level) show the only significant coefficients.

Complexity shows the strongest influence on general individualization in the pooled complete case analysis. The coefficients are large and highly significant, so I will have a closer look to get at their substantive contribution to explaining general individualization. Since raw logistic coefficients elude a direct interpretation, I transform them to odds ratios by raising e to their power. The result is the average increase or decrease in odds ratios of the dependent variable, here personalization, to occur regardless of the other coefficient's values. Predicted probabilities have to be derived in a further step setting all included predictive factors to fixed values. The empirical values of complexity range from 2.05 to 2.66 with a mean value of 2.41. Since this variable has been centered and consequently now is limited to bounds much narrower than $-1/+1$, interpreting the effect of a .1 increase gives us more valid information about the actual influence of complexity. Therefore, I raise e to the power of only one tenth of complexity's coefficient to derive the estimated effect of a .1 increase in mean reported complexity by the voters in the corresponding online surveys. Setting all other variables at their means and the dummy variables to zero consequently indicates that a .1 increase in mean reported complexity by voters (= 10% of the surveyed voters change their level of agreement on the question "Politics nowadays is so complicated that people like me have no chance of understanding what is going on." by only one point upwards on a 0 to 10 scale) in Canadian national elections (the reference category) results in a change in propensity of a party to apply general individualization in their advertising's framing by 12 percentage points from 30% to 42% (19 percentage points from 24% to 43% for content). Although this increase is calculated on the base of a hypothetical Canadian national election with mean values of all other continuous explanatory variables and all dummy variables set to zero, and although the effect has a logarithmic scale leading to a diminishing effect at the extremes, and although it is

dependent on other predictors' values¹², this is far from a trivial change. If voters perceive politics as complex, party strategists are apparently ready to offer general individualization as a heuristic to guide voters through the decision making process of whom to vote for. When looking at separate analyses of TV and newspaper advertising we see that this effect is mainly driven by newspaper advertisements, but also positive, even if not significant, for TV advertisement (see Appendix, Table A.1).

The level of presidentialization interacted with running an executive candidate also shows a stable pattern of influence on general individualization in the pooled complete case analysis. Although neither the direct election-level effect of presidentialization, measured as an additive index of direct executive elections, institutionally strong executives and televised debates, nor the party-level effect of running an executive candidate are significant by themselves, their composite effect taking into account the interaction between them is a significant predictor of general individualization. Running an executive candidate in a highly presidentialized system (with a strong, directly elected executive whose contenders face off in a televised debate) on average increases a party's propensity to individualize campaign framing from 10% to 26%. In less presidentialized systems, where only one of the facets of presidentialization is present, e.g. in Swiss cantons with a directly elected but weak executive without televised debates, the effect of running an executive candidate on general individualization is diminished to a mere increase of one percentage point. Individualization of campaign content is affected in a comparable way by the interaction of presidentialization and the presence of an executive candidate. A 30 percentage point increase in probability of individualizing advertising content for a party running an executive candidate in a presidentialized system versus a party choosing not to do so shrinks to a 7 percentage point difference in less presidentialized systems. These patterns are

¹² e.g. in Spanish TV advertising for European elections (the only two significant effects of control variables) change in general individualization by a .1 increase of complexity would be diminished to 11 (framing) and 5 (content) percentage points, respectively.

mainly driven by TV cases. When looking at TV content's individualization separated from newspaper ads (Appendix, Table A.1), presidentialization even shows an additional significant positive effect complementing its interaction with running an executive candidate, as expected in hypotheses 4 and 5.2. For individualized TV framing, higher levels of presidentialization do not result in a significant increase in individualization levels beyond its interaction with running an executive candidate.

For individualization in newspaper advertisements, however, the influence of presidentialization is completely turned on its head. Both framing and content show a similar decrease in odds for a 1-point increase of the presidentialization index as its positive effect on TV framing. At first sight, this is highly counterintuitive. But when looking closely and taking into account the large positive effects of the country dummies for Germany and Spain, we can see that this effect is largely an inter-level effect produced by Swiss cases. And when we also include the positive effect of regional elections, the negative presidentialization effect nearly vanishes. Since the presidentialization index does not vary a lot within countries and the country differences get canceled out by the adoption of fixed effects, we have to check the imputation analysis later to see if we have a credible anomaly here or if we are dealing with a statistical artifact (the multiple imputation analyses in Table 5.1, columns 3 and 4 look like the latter). The same goes, however, for the independent effect of presidentialization when looking at France, the only case with a directly elected executive in the TV content sample. However, the additional effect of European elections also has to be taken into account there.

Beyond the three factors discussed above, which are complexity, presidentialization and running an executive candidate, no systematic influence of other variables on the degree of individualization is visible in the complete case analysis. As expected, mediatization of the electoral arena does not seem to play a role in consistently explaining general individualization. None of the mediatization predictors show an effect with a credible interval of at least 90%. Even if we attributed country differences exclusively to media systems, the Canadian reference

category only shows significant differences to Spain, but not to France, where we would also theoretically expect a negative coefficient due to its polarized-pluralist media system. Germany's democratic corporatist system also does not differ substantially from Canada, when taking alternative explanations into account. Also newspaper advertising's insignificant differences to TV advertising are not what media scholars would expect. Therefore, the mediatization hypothesis 1 does not find support when analyzing general individualization here. The electoral system, the institutional predictor theorized to influence personalization besides presidentialization also does not show support for its hypothesized influence on personalization as individualization. The electoral system's suitability for personal vote earning attributes (PVEA) is not a significant predictor for individualization in the complete cases analyzed here. Hypothesis 3 therefore also finds no support in the analysis of general individualization.

Table 5.1 Complete case and multiple imputation analyses of general individualization

	CC framing (1)	CC content (2)	MI framing (3)	MI content (4)
beta 0	-0.84 (1.00)	-1.16 (1.02)	-0.56 (0.87)	-1.12 (0.83)
mediatization	-0.07 (0.32)	0.26 (0.34)	0.01 (0.29)	0.41 (0.27)
complexity	5.26** (2.65)	8.94*** (2.71)	3.51* (1.92)	7.10*** (2.03)
elec. system	-0.07 (0.09)	-0.03 (0.09)	-0.01 (0.08)	0.06 (0.08)
presidentialization	-0.46 (0.41)	0.30 (0.41)	-0.03 (0.33)	0.53* (0.32)
presidentialization * executive candidate	0.59* (0.30)	0.48* (0.29)	0.44* (0.27)	0.36 (0.28)
executive candidate (d)	-0.60 (0.60)	-0.14 (0.58)	-0.67 (0.51)	-0.28 (0.53)
centrism	0.08 (0.08)	-0.02 (0.07)	0.11* (0.07)	-0.01 (0.07)
populism (d)	-0.67 (0.41)	-0.51 (0.41)	-0.71** (0.32)	-0.70** (0.32)
professionalization	-0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.03)	0.00 (0.03)
incumbency (d)	0.05 (0.30)	-0.11 (0.30)	0.01 (0.27)	-0.03 (0.27)
France (d)	1.05 (0.87)	-1.15 (0.90)	1.05 (0.98)	-0.89 (0.95)
Germany (d)	0.72 (0.77)	0.06 (0.76)	-0.03 (0.75)	-0.35 (0.71)
Germany * newspaper (d)	-0.55 (1.16)	-0.26 (1.18)	-0.59 (1.02)	-0.66 (0.98)
Spain (d)	3.24** (1.57)	4.12** (1.61)	2.17* (1.31)	3.37*** (1.30)
Spain * newspaper (d)	0.60 (1.22)	0.45 (1.18)	-0.47 (1.02)	-0.70 (0.97)
newspaper (d)	0.35 (1.10)	1.29 (1.09)	0.63 (0.96)	1.36 (0.92)
European (d)	-1.74** (0.88)	-0.62 (0.88)	-0.35 (0.65)	0.51 (0.64)
Regional (d)	0.54 (0.40)	-0.44 (0.41)	0.65** (0.30)	-0.24 (0.34)
N	143	143	254	254

Notes: Mean posterior beta regression coefficients with logit link, standard deviations in parentheses, reference country is Canada, reference level is national, * credible interval > 90%, ** c.i. > 95%, *** c.i. > 99%

After reviewing the explanatory power of election-level variables, we will now turn to the party-level predictors for general individualization. As we have seen in the analysis of the presidentialization hypotheses 4 and 5.2 above, the running of an executive candidate has no significant extra effect on parties' level of individualization besides its contribution to the interaction effect with the presidentialization of the political system as a whole. Hypothesis 5.1 therefore also has to be rejected for general individualization. The results of the pooled analysis also do not indicate systematic influence of the competing parties' position in the electoral competition on general individualization. However, when disaggregating the analysis by media outlets, we see positive effects of ideological centrism at least for TV advertising, which is, at least for individualized framing, confirmed later in the pooled multiple imputation analysis. The closer a party to the weighted mean position in the electoral arena, the more individualization we see in TV advertising framing and content (Appendix, Table A.1). A decrease in ideological distance to the party system's center by 10 points¹³, when setting the centered predictor and the dichotomous control variables to zero, increases the propensity of parties to individualize their TV advertising's framing by over 5 percentage points (4 for content). For TV advertising, this supports the underlying argument of the centrism hypothesis 6 that centrist parties, to increase their unique selling point, do indeed rely on personalization to make themselves distinguishable from alternatives in the crowded ideological center of party competition.

However, the picture is not as rosy for newspaper individualization. Centrism in party competition does not show any effect on individualized framing and even a negative effect on individualized content. Although the effect is small (as are the positive effects for TV), it has a credible interval greater than 90%, which makes it unwise to ignore, especially when we take the low number of cases upon which this analysis is based into account. It also leads to the

¹³ The underlying political space based on the CMP calculations stretches from -100 to +100. So depending on the location of the center, parties can accumulate up to $100 + |\text{center}|$ distance points. Empirically, however, we deal with a range of 0.4 to 66.2 (divided by 10 for model clarity) with a median of 15.5 and a mean of 19.3.

nonsignificant findings for centrism in the pooled analyses. The centrism hypothesis 6 therefore only finds tentative support.

Populism does not show the theoretically expected effect on individualization. This might be due to the fact that this analysis' explanandum is the combined individualization of leaders and other candidates and populism's main motivation for personalization should be advertising a leader figure as the embodiment of the people's will, but since leadership individualization constitutes roughly two thirds of general individualization (as seen in Figure 4.1), its independent influence might not be as strong as expected, therefore leading to the rejection of the populism hypothesis 7 for general individualization. In addition, high professionalization, as found in most of the tightly organized populist parties under investigation here, might not be easy to disentangle from being populist per se. When looking at newspaper content, populism is even related to a (weakly significant, but still with a credible interval greater than 90%) negative effect on individualization. This relationship also holds in the analysis of completed imputation data, which will be seen in the remainder of this chapter.

The independent effect of professionalization on individualization in this complete case analysis unfortunately can only be tested indirectly via the vote share auxiliary variable. Its small and nonsignificant influence does rather serve a control function than a thorough test of the professionalization hypothesis 8.

Finally, we look at the effect of incumbency. Having renowned candidates with an executive track record at one's disposal for campaign communication and advertising is theoretically conducive to personalization. The empirical pattern, however, does not confirm this notion and for newspaper framing even shows a negative effect of incumbency on general personalization. So the complete case analysis does not lend support for hypothesis 9 expecting incumbency to be a predictor for personalization.

In general, the party-level predictors show less conclusive picture as the election-level predictors did. Where centrism shows the expected predictive power for individualization in

TV advertising and supports the unique selling point argument, individualization in newspaper advertising is predicted by decreases in centrism and the absence of populism and incumbency. However, these results, although based on all available data for the elections under investigation, might not be showing the whole picture. Missing data led to the exclusion of one third of the relevant party cases for TV and more than half of the cases for newspaper advertising. To check if these patterns have produced statistical artifacts in the complete case analysis, we will now turn to the robustness check via imputed data.

5.3 Imputation Analysis of General Individualization

To check if the results found in the complete case analysis above are robust or due to listwise deletion patterns, I ran the same beta regression analyses, but on 20 imputed datasets, where the missing values leading to deletion of cases were imputed by the “mice” algorithm. The results of said regression analyses were then pooled using Rubin’s rule (2004) to account for intra- and inter-imputation variance and therefore can be expected to provide a rather conservative robustness test. If they were based on the same number of cases, the standard deviations produced by this process would exceed their counterparts from the complete-case analysis, because they are also reflecting the uncertainty due to the multiple imputations, not only of the Bayesian beta modelling with a medium number of cases. However, since the imputation process allows me to include formerly deleted cases (254 imputed vs. 143 complete cases), the results empirically show comparable standard deviations, but effects are based on a higher number of cases, making them more robust. So although we might find fewer significant effects here, those we find should constitute a valid underpinning for confirming or rejecting hypotheses.

When comparing explanatory factors for general individualization in advertising framing in columns 1 and 3, we see congruent patterns: Complexity is still by far the most influential predictor for general individualization, although its effect sizes drop and the credible interval

in advertising framing is reduced from 99% to 90%. Also, the interaction effect of presidentialization with running an executive candidate is significantly positive and similar in size to the one found in the complete case analysis of advertising framing. Its effect on advertising content, however, is still positive, but not within a credible interval of over 90% anymore. For advertising content, an independent positive effect of presidentialization replaces the significant interaction effect of the complete case analysis. Nevertheless, in combination and interacted with running a presidential candidate, the model still predicts a mean 16 percentage point increase in probability of a party running a candidate in a highly presidentialized system vs. parties not running a candidate, compared to a mere 2 percentage points difference between parties running and not running an executive candidate in a lowly presidentialized system. This bolsters the claim of Hypothesis 5.2 that the direct and spillover effects of presidentialization are most visible for parties running executive candidates when explaining individualization in campaign communication.

Also, ideological centrism's positive effect on personalization is confirmed by the multiple imputation analysis. Even beyond the results of the complete case analysis, advertising framing by centrist parties is significantly more individualized when taking all relevant parties into account. The effect is still mainly driven by the TV cases (see Appendix, Table A.2), but indicates a need for centrist parties to distinguish themselves from their abundant ideological competition in the center of the ideological space.

The other robust explanatory pattern for TV advertising framing and content is a surprisingly negative significant effect of populism on individualization. Although not significant in the complete case analysis, the multiple imputations uncover a negative relationship of populism with individualization. The theoretical expectations were opposite, but especially expecting a leader focus of populist individualization. So whether this is the result of concentrating advertising on leaders paired with a subpar level of individualization of campaign advertising featuring non-leaders, dropping the overall level of individualization, or if the empirical data

indeed rejects the populism, hypothesis 7 will be determined in the next chapter where I concentrate on leadership individualization.

When looking at the explanatory power of institutions besides presidentialization, at mediatization, and at party-level variables for individualization advertising framing and content, the results are rather sobering. None of these predictors show substantial support for the theorized positive effects that go beyond chance and some are even negative. If this is due to a substantive lack of explanatory power of the factors analyzed here or if the pooling of leadership and non-leadership individualization covers up separate explanations will be answered in the following chapter.

5.4 Discussion

General individualization is the most overarching and least specific type of personalization. Operationalized as depicting or mentioning any politician, be it a leader or a backbencher, in an ad or as a speaker or object of a quasi-sentence, this concept represents a rather undifferentiated approach to personalization. This led me to the expectation that especially institutional and competition-related factors should increase this type of personalization, whose utility as addition to the unique selling point of a party and as heuristic does not depend on certain qualities, as media suitability does. And this expectation tends to be confirmed: Mediatization did not play any role in explaining levels of individualization and neither did professionalization or incumbency. The apparent absence of robust government-level and country-specific idiosyncrasies (with the exception of a positive effect for Spain) supports the notion that the variables chosen to explain the parties' choice for individualization here cover the theoretically and empirically relevant variance.

The positive influence of complexity, of the presence of executive candidates in presidentialized systems, and the tentative positive influence of ideological centrism point towards the theoretically expected pattern that general individualization is mainly driven by

parties' need to distinguish themselves via personalization adding to their unique selling point as well as offering candidates as carriers of decision heuristics. Populism, however, showed a robust negative effect on general individualization, which was not expected by theory. Populists' neglect of or outright opposition to programmatic linkage and representation actually should boost their reliance on personalization. But the charismatic linkage populism offers as an alternative often concentrates on leaders. The question if this inherent concentration is responsible for populism's counterintuitive negative influence here will be answered in the next chapter, where I will cover patterns and determinants of leadership individualization.

6. Explaining Leadership Individualization

After reviewing patterns of and explanations for general individualization in election campaigns, I will now turn to a theoretically and empirically highly relevant subset of this type of personalization: Individualization concentrated on party leadership. A large share of personalization's appeal is derived from its suitability for coverage in a mediatized environment concentrating on leading figureheads as embodiments of their parties, or as antagonists for political office. But political leaders have not only gained influence by their media-fueled celebrity status; institutional factors of the presidentialization of politics, e.g. strengthening of the (chief) executive in multilevel governance, also makes using top candidates as figureheads attractive for political mobilization via campaign communication. However, as we have seen in Chapter 4, the proportion of individualized campaign communication that is concentrated on party leaders varies from country to country as well as between levels of government. Accounting for roughly two thirds of individualized campaign communication on average, there are stark differences between for example Canada's (one quarter) and Germany's (five sixths) relative proportion of leadership individualization in TV advertising content, which calls for a differentiated approach for explaining its patterns. For this purpose, I will again first present the distributions of leadership individualization per country and level of government for a first disaggregated insight into the appearance of leadership individualization and to justify the use of beta regression analysis. In the following, I will conduct said analysis for the complete cases available to identify the predictors of leadership individualization and compare them to the theoretical expectations from the hypotheses in chapter 2, and then test the robustness of those findings with a multiple imputation analysis of all relevant parties. As indicated above, I expect especially the media- and leadership-related factors like presidentialization and the presence of executive candidates, as well as populism, to be the main contributors to the explanation of leadership individualization in campaign communication.

6.1 Distributions of Leadership Individualization

As seen for general individualization in chapter 5.1, Figure 6.1 also shows that leadership individualization is not a strategy employed by all parties under investigation here. In fact, we see a vast majority of parties either applying leadership individualizing to (nearly) all or (nearly) none of their campaign communication. This divide is especially visible in TV framing and TV content, to a lesser extent but still notable for newspaper advertising. Since leadership individualization is a subset of general individualization, the mean values in both media outlets as well as in framing and content are logically lower than their counterparts in general individualization. However, the mean level of leadership individualization does not vary as much between media outlets and framing or content (from over 35% to just below 50%). Differences between TV and newspaper advertising are twofold: TV advertising shows a slightly higher proportion of “all or nothing” leadership individualization strategies compared to newspapers and, while the mean level of leadership individualized framing is practically equal for TV and newspapers, the mean proportion of newspapers’ leadership individualized content is higher than on TV. If these differences are due to the fact that TV advertising includes French and Canadian cases with a low average level of leadership personalization, whereas the newspaper subsample contains the more average Swiss cases, will be visible in the next section. Taking the observations so far together we can conclude that we are apparently dealing with a relevant and widely, but unequally, used strategy in election campaign communication.

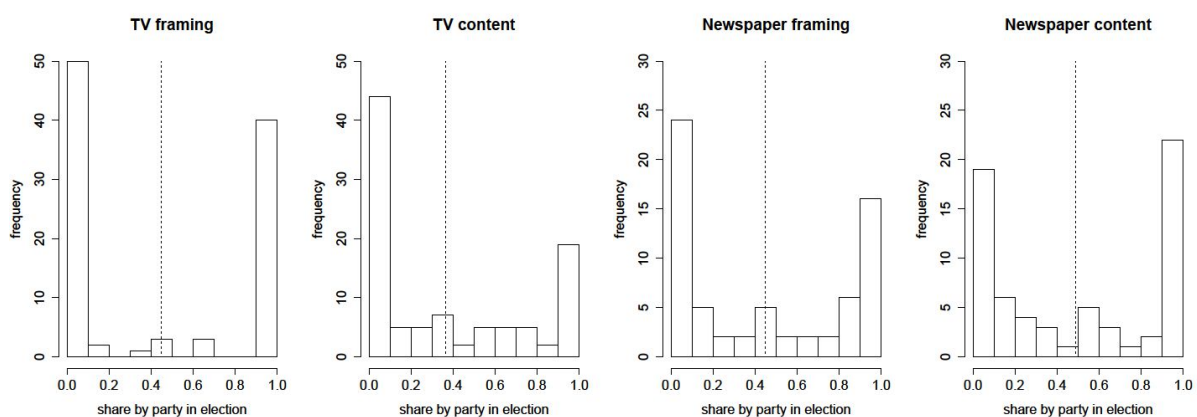


Figure 6.1 Distributions of leadership individualization in TV and newspaper advertising
Note: Means as dashed lines

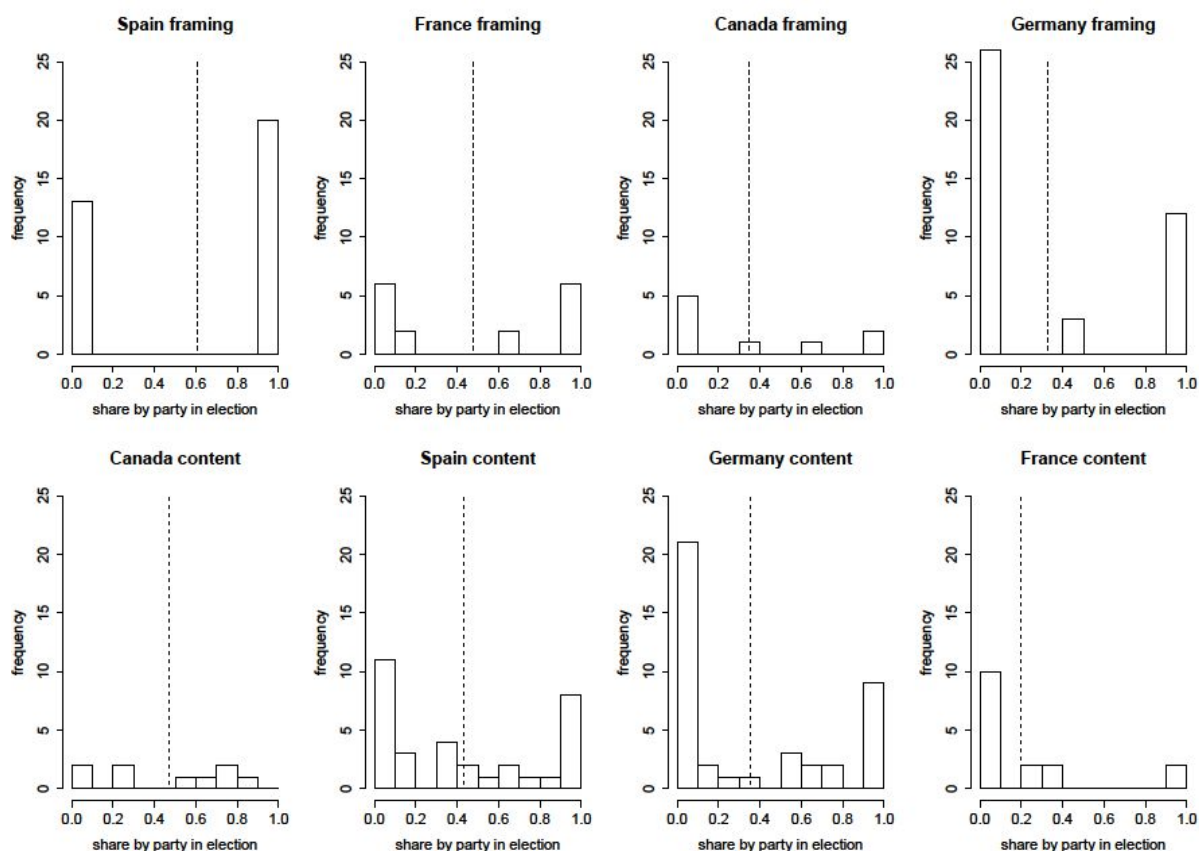


Figure 6.2 Distributions of leadership individualization in TV advertising; framing and content by countries
Note: Means as dashed lines

When disaggregating the distributions of leadership individualization in TV advertising by countries in Figure 6.2, we see a quite diverse picture. Spanish and French parties show the highest level of individualized leadership framing, which might indicate a higher propensity of polarized pluralist media systems for leadership individualization, but the wide range of the distributions (all or nothing in Spain, more uniform in France) within these countries casts doubt on an overarching systemic influence on all parties competing in these media systems. The “all or nothing” pattern is also visible in German framing, but with more than twice the number of parties opting for “nothing” than for “all”. Similarly, the majority of Canadian parties under investigation here opt for no leadership individualization in TV advertising framing, which

scholars of media systems would expect to be much higher in Canada's liberal media environment.

In addition to differences in mean levels by countries, leadership individualization in TV advertising content is also distributed more evenly over the whole range of proportions than framing. The Canadian parties' TV advertising shows a nearly uniform distribution of leadership individualization proportions ranging from zero to up to 90%, resulting in a mean value of just below 50%. Interestingly, this value is higher than the mean content proportions of TV leadership individualization in all other countries under investigation as well as Canada's mean proportion of leadership individualization in framing. So we can conclude that Canadian TV advertising mentions leaders more often in content than depicting them as the central character of an ad. This is due to the popularity of celebrity endorsements in Canadian politics, a feature also popular in Swiss newspaper ads, but not as visibly creating differences in framing and content (see nearly equal means for Swiss framing and content in Figure 6.3). Spanish and German TV advertising's content, like framing, shows the "all or nothing" pattern of leadership individualization, only to a lesser extent, most probably due to the more fine-grained content measure of quasi-sentences compared to the overall framing of an ad. This pattern hints at the crucial role of candidates for chief executive office in these countries. The candidates for the German Chancellorship and the Spanish Prime Ministerial office as well as regional prime ministerial candidates in these countries are regularly focal points in their parties' campaigns. Parties running these candidates which usually are the leading parties of the two strongest camps can be expected to concentrate their advertising strategy on the leaders, whereas other parties, which do not have an equally exposed figurehead, tend not to do so. In addition, the leadership in Germany and Spain only has to share attention with a rather impersonal mass of party rank and file elected by party lists in PR systems. In Canadian and French single-member district contests however, even backbenchers have the incentive to cultivate a personal vote via individualization and therefore decrease the share of limelight devoted to leadership alone. All

this can explain the all-or-nothing divide in Spain and Germany versus Canada and France as well as the higher proportion of “nothing” in Germany, where up to five parties are viable alternatives to the chancellor parties SPD and CDU/CSU, than in Spain, where only IU, Podemos and occasional regional parties have been viable alternatives to PSOE and PP in the timeframe of this investigation. Which of the factors discussed in this section is most important for explaining leadership individualization will be determined by the multivariate statistical analysis later in this chapter.

Looking at the distribution of leadership individualization in newspaper advertising framing and content, we also see the PM pattern in Spain and Germany. In the Spanish cases, the concentration on leadership is especially high, because only the leading parties with prime ministerial candidates made any advertising efforts in newspapers. In Germany, the comparison of TV and newspapers shows similar commonalities between the media outlets as in Spain, if we take into account that German parties without executive candidates do not completely neglect newspaper advertising. In Switzerland, leadership individualization is a widespread facet of campaign strategy, but by no means is it employed by all parties. No systematic concentration of cases can be seen in the Swiss cases of Figure 6.3. If this is due to different competitive environments in different regions, or the fact that some parties do not have control over all their newspaper advertising in Switzerland’s open-list PR system, or variance in other party-related explanatory factors (for example presence or absence of executive candidates) will be analyzed in the next section by means of beta regression analysis of complete and imputed cases.

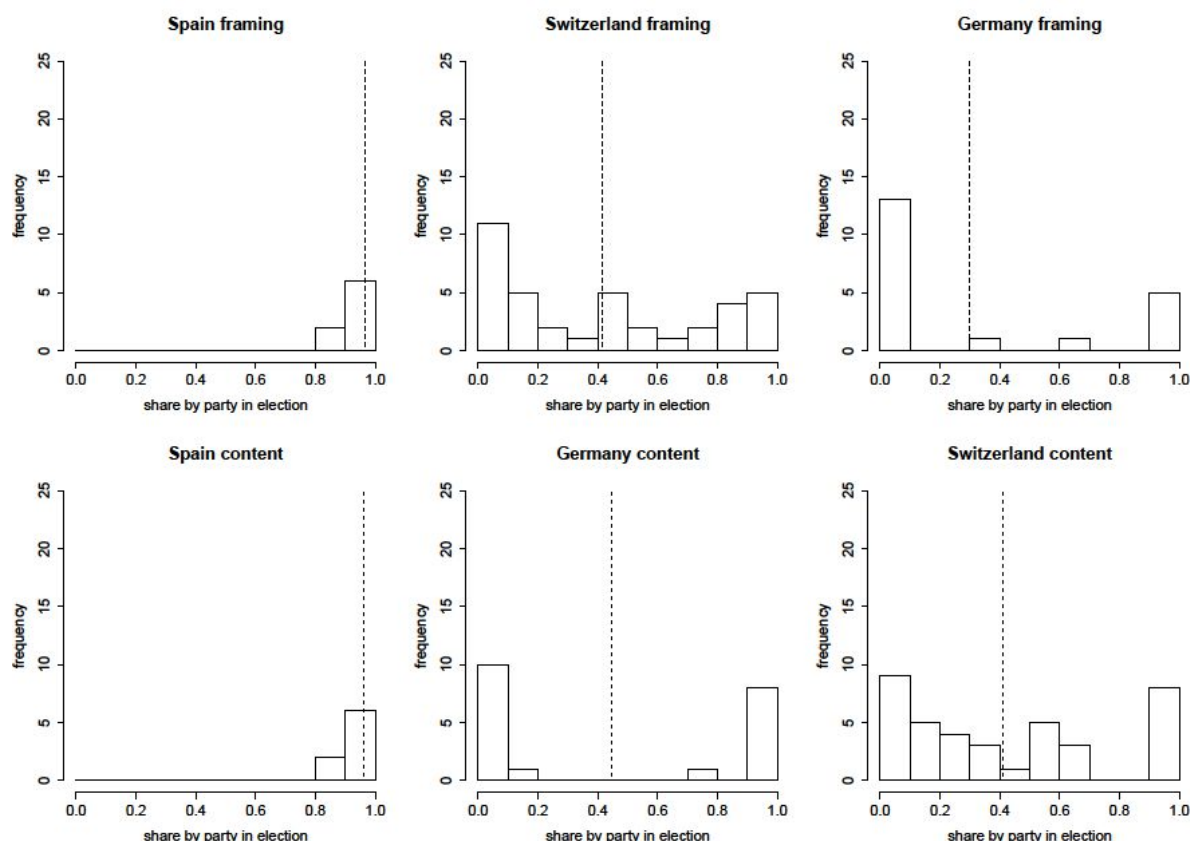


Figure 6.3 Distributions of leadership individualization in newspaper advertising; framing and content by countries
 Note: Means as dashed lines

Comparing leadership individualization by levels of government in Figures 6.4 and 6.5 does not offer a conclusive picture. Although also here we can observe that the majority of parties individualize their campaign communication fully or not at all, which holds true for TV as well as newspaper advertising, we do not know yet on which grounds or explanatory factors this pattern is based. When comparing the mean levels of leadership individualization in TV advertising's framing and content we see that regional and national elections show hardly different levels (and patterns), whereas the mean level of individualized leadership framing of EU campaign communication clearly trails the other two. This does correspond to the original second-order argument of the higher salience of national than European elections. European second-order elections are conceptualized as less important, less salient, and, consequently, less attractive for leaders to be featured in. This could be one reason for the clearly visible drop in leadership individualization between the national and regional arenas and the European

competition in the TV spots analyzed here. However, the regional election campaigns under investigation here show roughly the same levels of individualized leadership framing and content as the national one, which does not lend itself to conclude systematic salience differences leading to leadership individualization differences between those two lower levels here, and even more prominent, the patterns of newspaper advertising leadership personalization show a reversed order. Here the European average campaigns' levels of leadership individualization (around two thirds for framing and even more for content) are highest compared to the regional and national level (all between 40 and 50%).

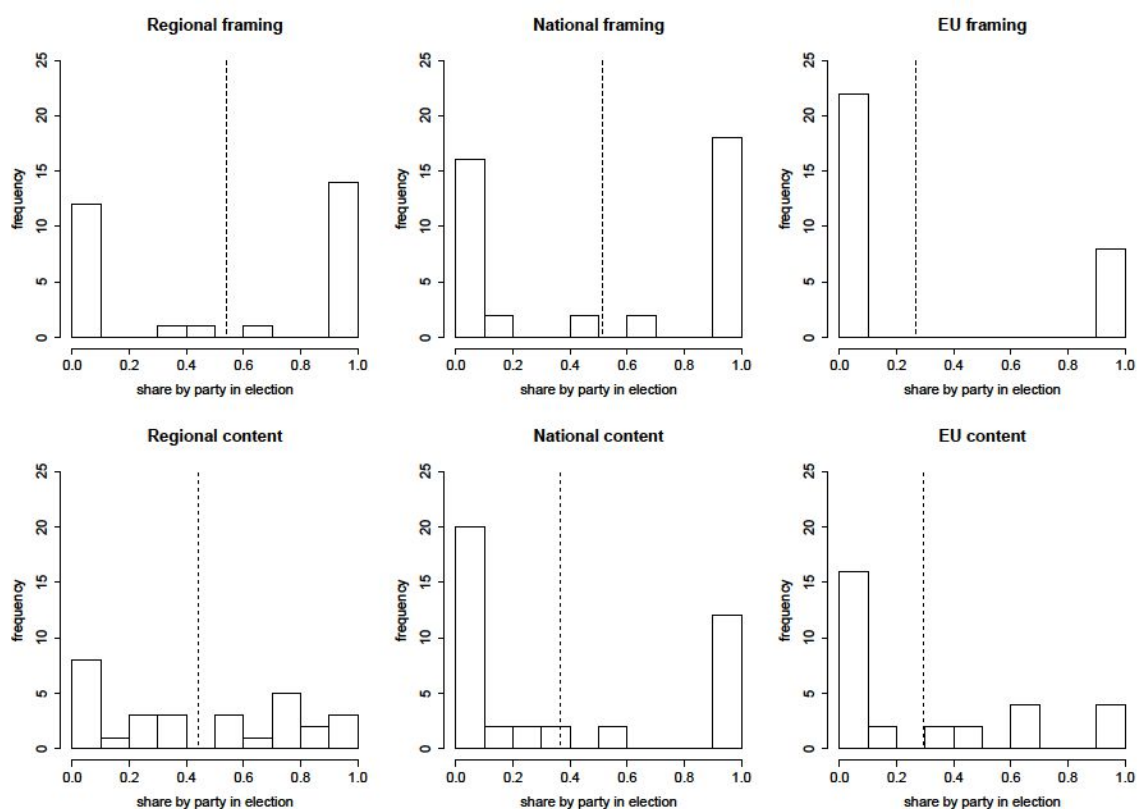


Figure 6.4 Distributions of leadership individualization in TV advertising; framing and content by levels of government
Note: Means as dashed lines

So leadership individualization can safely be concluded to be not systematically influenced by levels of government across media outlets. Nevertheless, we see differences that have to be controlled for in the multivariate analysis of complete cases and multiply imputed datasets in the next sections.

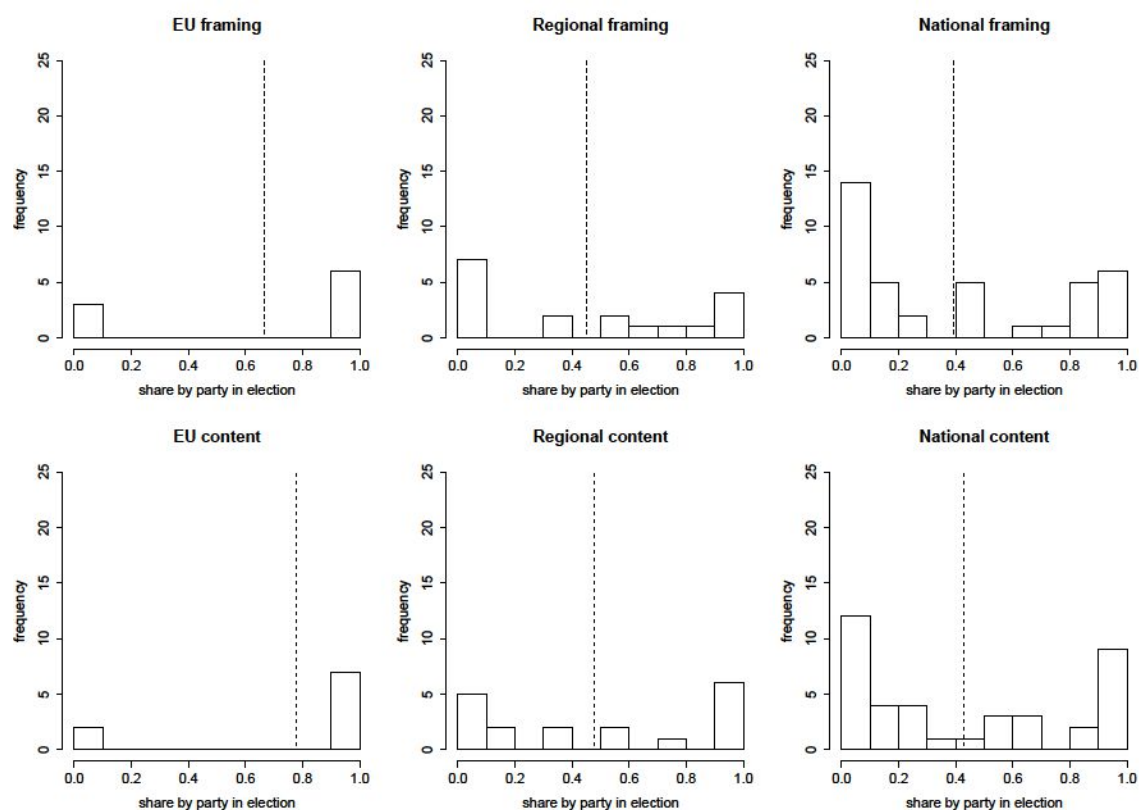


Figure 6.5 Distributions of leadership individualization in newspaper advertising; framing and content by levels of government
Note: Means as dashed lines

6.2 Complete Case Analysis of Leadership Individualization

Leadership individualization has a strong theoretical link to mediatization, presidentialization, and populism. These three explanatory factors can be expected to contribute most to a party strategist's motivation to concentrate attention on party leadership instead of party ideology, program and image on the one hand, and rank-and-file candidates on the other. The complete case analyses presented in the first two columns of Table 6.1 partly confirm this expectation. As in the previous chapter, regarding the differences in distributions justifies the following multivariate analysis of leadership individualization's usage by parties in different electoral

arenas. A total of 143 observed cases have been analyzed using Bayesian beta regression with a logit link, 5 chains with 10,000 iterations each, of which the first 1,000 have been discarded as burn-in, are the basis for the reported posterior means of the predictor's effects as logged odds ratios. As in the general individualization analysis, control dummies have been included to account for country- and media- specific idiosyncrasies, as well as for systematic differences between levels of government not covered by the modeled covariates. To account for different mechanisms influencing advertising's framing and content, these two aspects have been analyzed separately with differing outcomes, as we will see in the following.

The strongest significant predictor of leadership individualization framing is the interaction term of presidentialization with the running of a candidate explicitly for executive office. Given all other predictors are at their means and the dummies set to zero¹⁴, if a party runs a candidate in a fully presidentialized system (in this case the three requirements "strong executive", "directly elected executive", and "debate" are met), then the probability of this party applying leadership individualization framing is over 20%, whereas parties without executive candidates only show a probability of under 5%. For a medium level of presidentialization (=2), this difference changes to just over 16% with an executive candidate versus under 8% without, and for low levels of presidentialization (for example in elections for the European Parliament), the difference between running a candidate and not is within 1 percentage point. This observation confirms that presidentialization per se is not the main driver behind leadership individualization, but that a party needs to run an executive candidate to make use of the institutional arrangement favorable for personalization. However, contrary to the theoretical expectation, neither populism nor mediatization have an effect on individualized leadership framing stronger than within the range expected by mere chance in this joint consideration of

¹⁴ i.e. for parties competing in hypothetical national Canadian elections. The changes in probability reported here obviously also depend on the values of the other variables, but since none of the control variables have a significant impact, the reported probabilities give a reasonable approximation of the effects for all cases.

newspaper and TV advertising. Also, when looking at the other theoretically less influential but still relevant predictors of personalization, neither the election-level variables like complexity or the electoral system nor the party-level variables ideological centrism, party professionalization, and incumbency empirically contribute to explaining variance in individualized leadership framing.

When disaggregating the analysis of leadership individualization and looking at TV and newspapers separately (see Appendix, Table A.3), we get a more detailed picture of what constitutes the explanatory patterns of this complete case analysis of advertising framing. For TV, the conducive effect of executive candidates in presidentialized systems on leadership individualization of framing is as clearly visible as in the pooled analysis. In addition to that, a positive influence of ideological centrism can also be made out, indicating an explanatory role of leaders as carriers of the unique selling point of a candidacy on TV. If this is due only to a deliberate enhancement of the party's communication strategy by leaders' face recognition value or if this is mainly achieved by marketing their private traits will be clarified in the analysis of leadership privatization in chapter 8. Newspaper ads' level of leadership individualization in framing however is determined to a larger extent by factors related to heuristics, and party professionalization. In this media outlet, presidentialization even seems to have a negative effect on leadership individualization. Higher proportions of leadership individualization in newspaper advertising's framing are attributed mainly to the voters' notion of complexity of politics, and a positive effect of party professionalization. Populism, which has been theorized as a main driving force behind concentration on leadership, neither shows an effect here nor on TV. The electoral system's theoretical suitability for personalization as well as ideological centrism and incumbency of a party even show significant negative effects on leadership individualization in newspaper advertising's framing. But since the differences between countries and levels of government are much more pronounced in newspaper advertising than on TV, the combination of a limited number of cases on which this subsample

analysis is based (58) and strong country- and level-specific idiosyncrasies leads me to treat the newspaper framing results with caution. Nevertheless we cannot disregard them and their contribution to the, beside the stable influence of executive candidates in presidentialized systems, rather inconclusive bigger picture of leadership individualization in advertising framing.

The complete case analysis of advertising content shows a slightly different pattern than framing. The positive influence of executive candidates in highly presidentialized systems which we also found for framing is complemented by explanatory power of complexity and party professionalization. The theoretically expected positive influence of executive candidates in presidentialized systems is as visible in the respective interaction effect as in advertising framing. Its composite effect is even larger than for framing and on a higher overall level: A party's probability to use leadership individualization in their campaign is 56% vs. 27% for fully presidentialized systems, 30% vs. 18% for countries with for example a strong but indirectly elected executive with debates, and again only within 2 percentage points for low levels of presidentialization.

In addition to this effect, professionalization and especially complexity also play a major role here. Party professionalization's independent effect on leadership individualization in advertising content seems small, but is indeed statistically and substantially significant. An increase of professionalization by one unit, for example the availability of one more fully employed party secretary per one million voters or an increase in campaign budget by one currency unit per 10 voters, leads to an increase of the probability of a party using leadership individualization in their advertising's content from 7% to 12%.

Table 6.1 Complete case and multiple imputation analyses of leadership individualization

	CC framing (1)	CC content (2)	MI framing (3)	MI content (4)
beta 0	-1.34 (1.12)	-2.53** (1.07)	-1.07 (0.86)	-1.72* (0.90)
mediatization	0.01 (0.35)	0.33 (0.34)	0.02 (0.27)	0.27 (0.27)
complexity	2.55 (2.90)	6.00** (2.80)	1.23 (1.96)	3.33 (2.06)
elec. system	-0.03 (0.10)	-0.08 (0.09)	0.02 (0.08)	-0.01 (0.08)
presidentialization	-0.56 (0.44)	0.52 (0.42)	-0.38 (0.33)	0.45 (0.33)
presidentialization * executive candidate	0.86*** (0.31)	0.55* (0.29)	0.70*** (0.25)	0.40 (0.26)
executive candidate (d)	-0.89 (0.60)	-0.45 (0.57)	-0.53 (0.49)	-0.05 (0.51)
centrism	0.02 (0.08)	-0.12 (0.08)	0.02 (0.06)	-0.11 (0.07)
populism (d)	-0.24 (0.42)	-0.07 (0.45)	-0.20 (0.32)	-0.24 (0.33)
professionalization	0.01 (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)	0.01 (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)
incumbency (d)	0.08 (0.31)	-0.19 (0.30)	0.03 (0.27)	-0.05 (0.26)
France (d)	0.73 (0.90)	-1.36 (0.91)	0.43 (0.93)	-1.41 (0.95)
Germany (d)	0.93 (0.81)	0.98 (0.79)	0.49 (0.73)	0.27 (0.75)
Germany * newspaper (d)	-0.45 (1.20)	-1.81 (1.17)	-0.16 (0.97)	-1.21 (1.01)
Spain (d)	2.53 (1.76)	3.87** (1.68)	1.85 (1.31)	2.43* (1.39)
Spain * newspaper (d)	0.87 (1.27)	-0.47 (1.17)	0.11 (1.00)	-0.85 (0.99)
newspaper (d)	0.28 (1.16)	2.45** (1.08)	0.19 (0.95)	1.65* (0.96)
European (d)	-1.16 (0.91)	0.44 (0.88)	-0.64 (0.60)	0.57 (0.60)
Regional (d)	0.46 (0.43)	0.16 (0.42)	0.32 (0.30)	-0.01 (0.34)
N	143	143	254	254

Notes: Mean posterior beta regression coefficients with logit link, standard deviations in parentheses, reference country is Canada, reference level is national, * credible interval > 90%, ** c.i. > 95%, *** c.i. > 99%

The effect of complexity is even more prominent. Complexity was measured as the mean agreement to the question “Politics nowadays is so complicated that people like me have no chance of understanding what is going on.” on an 11-point scale. So if only 10% of the surveyed population change their perception by one point towards agreeing more to this statement, the probability of a party strategist offering leadership individualization as a heuristic for these voters overwhelmed by the complexity of politics changes from 7% to 13%, which is by no means negligible.

In addition, the control variables for Spain and newspaper ads versus the reference category account for inter-election variance not covered by the explanatory factors theorized above. Interestingly, they do not conform to theoretical macro-expectations about differences between countries and media outlets. Spain’s polarized pluralist media system is not expected to produce more personalized advertising content than the liberal media system of Canada (the reference category) and even if one were to attribute its high mean levels of leadership individualization to the dominant role that the prime minister plays in Spanish politics, this should be covered by the institutional explanatory factors of presidentialization or being mirrored, which it is not, by Germany’s “Kanzlerdemokratie”, where the chancellor or regional prime minister as head of the executive enjoys a similarly elevated position. But when taking into account that Spanish governments typically consist of only one party in comparison to German Chancellors being typically supported by a government coalition, this additional level of leadership individualization does not come as too much of a surprise anymore.

Also, newspaper advertising unexpectedly shows significantly more leadership individualization than TV advertising. This finding is counterintuitive in the sense that TV advertising has been theorized to be more conducive to concentration on political leaders in a horse-race context as well as that TV advertising’s production is much more costly and therefore centralized than newspaper advertising. And even if one attributed this effect to influential Swiss newspaper cases in the sample, it is still unclear why Switzerland’s egalitarian

and consensual system should produce a higher level of concentration on leadership than Canada, France, or Germany. However, the Swiss newspaper advertisements covered here provide two distinct features systematically raising leadership individualization: They are heavy with endorsements of party leaders for their lower-ranked party comrades and, more importantly, many advertisements mention leadership candidates for parallel upper-chamber (national) or executive (regional) contests without featuring them prominently. Therefore we see this difference in media outlets in advertising content, but not in framing.

When looking at leadership individualization of TV and newspaper advertising content separately (Appendix, Table A.3), we can see that the aggregate picture in column 2 of Table 6.1 is not only due to the higher number of TV cases in the analysis. Although the positive effect of executive candidates in presidentialized systems can mainly be explained by its prevalence in TV advertising, the overall significant influence of complexity and professionalization mainly has to be attributed to the newspaper cases. Even when controlling for the inherently higher levels of leadership individualization in newspaper advertising content, the systematic influence of these cases here constitutes the main driving force behind the effects of complexity and professionalization in the pooled analysis.

The complete case analyses previously presented only partly corroborate the expectation that leadership individualization should mainly be driven by mediatization, presidentialization, and populism. Although parties which present candidates for executive office in presidentialized systems generally tend to individualize their campaign communication concentrated on leadership more, mediatization and populism do not play an outstanding independent role, in fact no significant role at all, in the pooled analysis aimed at explaining leadership individualization. Therefore, the mediatization hypothesis and especially the populism hypothesis have to be dismissed for explaining leadership individualization. The candidate qualification of the presidentialization hypothesis, corroborated by the significant interaction effect of presidentialization and executive candidacies, can be upheld for leadership

individualization in general, whereas the complexity hypothesis, as well as the professionalization hypothesis, only finds support in the analysis of advertising content. The non-influence of the electoral system's suitability for personalization does not come as too much of a surprise in the analysis of leadership individualization. When concentrating on the elevated leadership candidates, who are in most of the surveyed cases indirectly elected (with the exception of France and the Swiss cantons), and whose electoral success is not directly related to their unique selling point versus their party comrades, this factor can be expected not to play a major role, leading to no support for the electoral system hypothesis. Incumbency, however, should actually give a boost to leadership individualization. But the differences between known and unknown leader candidates prior to the campaign is apparently diminished in its course or dealt with by party strategists in advance. The recognition advantage incumbents have, with which party strategists are theoretically expected to work to their advantage, might even lead to more leadership individualization by unknown opposition candidates, who have to catch up on popularity with established candidates, cancelling out incumbency's systematic influence and therefore generating no support for the incumbency hypothesis. Leadership individualization as a remedy for centrist parties' lack of a programmatic unique selling point easily distinguishable from their opponents is only visible in TV framing. Countered by an unexpected negative effect of incumbency in newspaper advertisements, there is no overall support for this theoretical expectation from the centrism hypothesis.

So the analysis of individualization concentrated exclusively on leadership has shown similar patterns as the analysis of general individualization in chapter 5. Especially the interaction effect of presidentialization and executive candidates, as well as complexity's influence conducive to individualized content, is rather congruent. But parties' leadership personnel are not the only group covered by individualization in their campaign strategy, as we have seen in section 4.1. Although only one quarter to one third of advertising's individualized framing and content, depending on the media outlet, covers non-leadership candidates, their appearance

should also be systematically related to explanatory factors covered by the presented analytic framework. The main problem, however, when looking at individualization tailored to non-leaders is the heterogeneity of this group. It includes parties' backbencher candidates down the ballot as well as sitting and potential ministers from the second row of a party and also highly motivated and well-funded individual candidates with a need to convince not only the electorate as a whole that their party is the best choice, but also that they personally are a better choice than their party comrades on the same list. Facing different challenges and opportunities of individualization, these three types of political non-leaders and their respective public relations advisors are therefore motivated by different mechanisms when deciding whether or not the candidate should appear personally on TV or newspaper advertising.

When party backbenchers personally appear on campaign advertising, this inclusion is most likely beyond their control. Their appearance is rather the result of their incidental mediagenicity paired with party leadership needing an advertisement character to make the ad more media-suitable, or offer a personalized heuristic to convey the party's appeal to voters less willing to invest cognitive resources in getting information on party programs and ideologies. For this group of backbenchers, one can expect the electoral arena's mediatization and complexity, as well as a party's professionalization and centrality, to contribute most to the explanation.

Variance in individualization featuring the second group of non-leaders, party celebrities not quite in the first row, for example sitting ministers, can be explained by a different set of motivating factors. Party strategists who have these types of non-leaders at their disposal can make the best use of their qualities by eliciting recognition in the minds of voters. This is especially easy for incumbents, who have a higher base recognition level and are more often covered in the media than opposition candidates. Their biggest asset, face recognition, provides heuristics in a complex environment for the voters, but also additional information to complement or compensate for a lack of ideological concept specificity of centrist parties,

enhancing their unique selling point. Consequently, I expect these three variables complexity, centrism, and incumbency to also have an effect on the individualization of non-leadership-centered political communication.

Highly motivated individual candidates who are well-funded but not party leaders can make the most of personalization when they use it to define themselves as alternatives to their internal party competitors. With the party's strategy planners taking care of advertising the party brand, these candidates can concentrate their own funds mainly on their own respective person and on cultivating a personal vote. Therefore, I also expect the suitability of the electoral formula for personal vote-earning attributes to have a significant influence on the level of non-leadership individualization.

The empirical results in Table 6.2 are indeed indicative of a juxtaposition of factors responsible for non-leadership individualization competing for explanatory power instead of one overarching explanation as found in the presence of executive candidates in presidentialized systems for leadership. None of the factors tested in the pooled models significantly contribute to a systematic explanation of non-leadership individualization of advertising framing, and only programmatic centrism shows a significant effect on individualization levels in advertising content. So taking the pooled analyses' results displayed in columns 1 and 2 of Table 6.2 for themselves, we could conclude that the centrism effect predicted either by the influence of vice-leaders or of backbenchers in the pool of non-leaders is the only, or the strongest, one when it comes to explaining non-leadership individualization. However, analyzing TV and newspaper advertising separately gives a more differentiated picture (see Appendix, Table A.5). Whereas the TV analyses do not shed any more light on the explanatory patterns for non-leadership individualization, besides a negative effect of populism, the newspaper analyses show a lot more, as will be discussed in the next paragraph.

The insignificant effect of populism on individualized non-leadership framing can mean two things, which have to do with two defining features of populism. At first glance, it could mean

that personalization as a way of making media complicity with populism's representatives easier, which is one strategic feature of populism, does, against expectations, just not justify the inclusion of non-leadership individualization by populist-party strategists and therefore refutes one of the expectations made on the grounds of the first group of candidates defined above, mediagenic backbenchers. However, if we take a step back and look at the network of intertwined strategic and ideological factors defining populism this could also mean, and I am more inclined to believe so, that individualization in populist parties is exclusively reserved for the leader figure. And this is not farfetched: The figurehead of a populist party as the embodiment of the common will or "the people" does not need (and often also does not encourage) other candidates presented in a personalized way beside him or her. Populists' level of non-leadership individualization can therefore rightly be expected to not be affected due to its hierarchical concentration on one leader figure. Especially in the highly centralized media outlet that is TV, where advertising production is expensive and highly regulated, and where party leadership plays a much more decisive role than in newspaper ads, this non- effect of populism on non-leadership individualization is not as surprising any more. In general, we also do not see effects attributed to backbenchers or individual candidates in the analysis of TV advertising's framing or content, which also has to do with the fact that TV advertising production is and has to be highly centralized in parties.

Table 6.2 Complete case and multiple imputation analyses of non-leadership individualization

	CC framing (1)	CC content (2)	MI framing (3)	MI content (4)
beta 0	-0.63 (1.00)	-0.81 (0.88)	-0.83 (0.80)	-1.34* (0.80)
mediatization	0.13 (0.33)	0.21 (0.31)	0.17 (0.26)	0.20 (0.24)
complexity	2.82 (2.56)	2.59 (2.31)	2.47 (1.70)	2.50 (1.72)
elec. system	0.03 (0.09)	0.12 (0.09)	0.02 (0.07)	0.09 (0.07)
presidentialization	0.08 (0.40)	-0.26 (0.36)	0.31 (0.31)	0.04 (0.33)
presidentialization * executive candidate	-0.34 (0.29)	-0.13 (0.28)	-0.19 (0.23)	0.01 (0.26)
executive candidate (d)	0.21 (0.56)	-0.11 (0.52)	-0.39 (0.42)	-0.71 (0.43)
centrism	0.04 (0.07)	0.11* (0.07)	0.06 (0.06)	0.09* (0.06)
populism (d)	-0.20 (0.39)	-0.17 (0.41)	-0.34 (0.30)	-0.17 (0.32)
professionalization	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)
incumbency (d)	0.15 (0.29)	0.31 (0.26)	0.11 (0.25)	0.20 (0.26)
France (d)	0.11 (0.87)	0.70 (0.81)	0.21 (0.88)	0.14 (1.62)
Germany (d)	-0.96 (0.77)	-1.04 (0.71)	-0.96 (0.71)	-0.40 (0.73)
Germany * newspaper (d)	0.29 (1.13)	1.07 (0.99)	-0.07 (0.92)	0.09 (0.93)
Spain (d)	0.20 (1.55)	0.25 (1.39)	0.09 (1.20)	0.85 (1.35)
Spain * newspaper (d)	-0.04 (1.19)	0.33 (1.05)	-0.22 (0.94)	-0.16 (0.92)
newspaper (d)	-0.19 (1.06)	-0.78 (0.92)	0.35 (0.89)	0.23 (0.87)
European (d)	-0.27 (0.85)	-0.57 (0.77)	0.53 (0.58)	0.23 (0.65)
Regional (d)	-0.01 (0.40)	-0.34 (0.37)	0.20 (0.30)	-0.13 (0.28)
N	143	143	254	254

Notes: Mean posterior beta regression coefficients with logit link, standard deviations in parentheses, reference country is Canada, reference level is national, * credible interval > 90%, ** c.i. > 95%, *** c.i. > 99%

However, the newspaper analysis of non-leadership individualization in advertising framing shows a more complex picture. Here the explanatory factors associated with individual well-funded candidates are significantly influencing the level of non-leadership individualization. The electoral system's suitability for cultivating a personal vote has a significant positive effect, as does centrism and incumbency both for advertising's framing and content. That we can observe these three effects directly linked to individual candidates in newspaper advertising is hardly surprising. Newspaper advertising, which is less regulated, as well as less costly to produce and to place, is a very fitting channel for cultivating a personal vote via individualization of campaign framing and content and independently of central party funds. In electoral systems highly conducive to cultivating a personal vote, i.e. with large district magnitudes and open lists, candidates do not only have to convince voters of their party's fitness for office, but they also have to make clear that they as individuals are a better fit than their party comrades on the same list. So here individualization works primarily as adding to the unique selling point of a candidate, but the party probably does not mind if their appeal is broadened by these candidates. This argument is supported and mirrored in the positive independent effect of a party's ideological centrism. Also, individualization works as a heuristic here, because the personal vote-earning attributes are not only useful as unique selling points, but also as heuristic shortcuts for voters facing a complex electoral system with open lists and large district magnitudes (Shugart et al., 2005). And the positive effect of incumbency, indicating that parties of the sitting government as a whole or their candidates individually individualize content more often than opposition parties, completes this picture. Non-leadership individualization in newspaper advertising is apparently driven mainly by individual candidates wanting to increase their party's as well as their own chances of representation in the legislature. When reviewing the hypothesized effects on leadership as well as non-leadership individualization discussed above, we see two different patterns. Leadership individualization, as expected, is most consistently explained by the interplay of running executive candidates in

a highly presidentialized system, corroborating the interaction hypothesis of these factors. Not surprisingly, an institutional framework conducive to concentration on leadership figures (presidentialization) is best used by rational party strategists who have the appropriate resources (executive candidates) to do so. In this domain of leadership individualization, a rational cost–benefit analysis by campaign planners shows that institutional personalization precedes all other forms of personalization, as theorized by Rahat and Sheafer (2007). This cost–benefit logic is further supported by party professionalization’s positive effect on leadership individualization in campaign content. In addition, the positive effect of complexity on leadership individualization content shows its utility as a heuristic. Other theorized influential factors, mediatization and incumbency in particular, but also centrism and populism do not systematically contribute to explaining levels of leadership individualization.

To explain individualization concentrated on non-leadership candidates, we had to dig deeper than the pooled analysis presented in Table 6.2. Where the pooled analysis showed nearly no systematic evidence for the hypothesized influence of the variables theorized for this investigation, the separate analysis of newspaper advertising at least partly supported the notion that especially well-funded individual candidates, with the approval of their parties, can and do rely on individualization as a campaign strategy. These candidates running in electoral systems where the expected utility of cultivating a personal vote via PVEA is high are likely to increase their party’s overall level of non-leadership individualization, supporting the electoral-system hypothesis. In addition, centrist parties also use these candidates to enhance their unique selling point, supporting the centrism hypothesis and their face-recognition value as incumbents, supporting the incumbency hypothesis. Not surprisingly presidentialization, executive candidates, and populism, the explanatory factors highly linked to leadership, did not show a systematic effect on the level of non-leadership professionalization. And the party’s professionalization resources are also apparently concentrated more on leadership than

backbenchers, lending no support to the professionalization hypothesis in explaining non-leadership individualization.

Whether these insights are robust or due to the complete cases under investigation here representing a skewed sample of all relevant parties in the competition will be tested by the robustness check via multiple imputations in the next section.

6.3 Imputation Analysis of Leadership Individualization

To test if the findings of the complete case analysis presented in the previous subchapter are robust to including all relevant parties and their qualities competing in the electoral arenas under investigation, I conducted additional Bayesian beta regression analyses of 20 imputed datasets. These datasets, filling observational gaps in variables that led to the exclusion of cases in the previous analyses via listwise deletion, were obtained by the mice algorithm and the analyses' results pooled under Rubin's rule. As stated in section 5.3, this rather conservative test sheds more light on the claims made by the complete case analysis due to its inclusion of uncertainty not only within imputations, but also between the aggregated results derived from it.

Looking at the results for advertisement framing in column 3 of Table 6.1, presenting the simultaneous systematic impact of explanatory factors theorized to be influencing campaign individualization, we can observe that the interaction effect of institutional presidentialization with the presence of executive candidates is not an artifact produced by listwise deletion. The composite effect of the interaction with its corresponding main effects is even stronger than in the complete case analysis. On the other hand, this effect is not visible in column 4, where the level of individualized content is analyzed. We can therefore conclude that leadership individualization is only robustly explained in advertising framing by this interaction, but not in content. Furthermore, as in the complete case analysis, we can attribute this finding mainly to its prevalence in TV advertising (Appendix, Table A.3). The positive effect of a centrist ideological party position also visible in the separate imputation analysis of TV advertising

framing does not find its way into the pooled analysis and neither does the positive effect of professionalization found in the imputation analysis of newspaper advertising's framing.

The multiple imputation results for leadership individualization in advertising content is even more sobering. Only the systematically higher level of this type of personalization in newspaper advertising and in Spain can be verified in the analysis in column 4 of Table 6.1. Neither the counterintuitive negative effects of ideological centrism and populism from a separate newspaper analysis, nor the hardly significant positive influence of professionalization in this subsample (Appendix, Table A.3) can be traced in the pooled analysis of multiply imputed complete datasets. The positive presidentialization or centrism effects on TV advertising's levels of leadership individualization also do not come up in the pooled analysis. Only the systematically higher rates of leadership individualization in newspaper advertising and in Spain are robust.

The pooled analysis of non-leadership individualization of advertising framing presented in column 3 of Table 6.2 is as sparsely rewarding as the complete case analysis. No significant systematic influence of any tested variable can be made out. Also when looking at the separate imputation analyses of advertising framing in TV and newspapers, the picture stays inconclusive. TV individualization featuring non-leaders is only weakly significantly influenced positively by populism (which is counterintuitive when thinking about populism's concentration on leadership); all other predictors' influence does not show a credible interval of over 90%. Separate imputation analysis of newspaper advertising's framing also does not show any significant associations of the tested explanatory factors with non-leadership individualization. When looking at the content in column 4, we find a positive influence of a party's centrist position on non-leadership individualization as seen in the pooled complete case analysis of column 2. We can therefore conclude that this effect is robust. As for the complete case analysis, we can get more insight from disaggregating this pooled analysis into TV and newspaper advertisings. Where non-leadership individualization in TV advertising content only

shows highly counterintuitive negative associations with complexity and centrism (and for the Spanish cases), newspaper advertising's separate imputation analysis confirms the positive influence of centrism and incumbency found in the complete case analysis, but also adds a counterintuitive positive effect of populism to it.

6.4 Discussion

Explaining the level of leadership individualization is apparently not as complex as it was theorized. It follows a relatively clear resource- and opportunity-based approach: Parties which run executive candidates in a presidentialized system feature their leaders more prominently in advertising framing as well as content. In addition, advertisement content's level of leadership individualization is also influenced by political complexity, a factor varying between electoral arenas, and party professionalization, varying within electoral arenas, at least when taking the complete case analyses into account. All these factors can be attributed to a very rational explanation of personalization. If a party has the prerequisites (executive candidates and/or funds and staff) and the arena is conducive to leadership personalization (presidentialized and/or perceived as complex), parties significantly more often employ a personalization strategy tailored to their leaders. Also visible from these patterns is the fact that not only features of the electoral arena explain variance in leadership professionalization, but single parties' resources and characteristics also have to be taken into account. The interaction of two factors from one level each, providing enhancement of the unique selling point, a complexity reduction and probably also media suitability, actually provides the strongest, most consistent explanation for leadership individualization.

Non-leadership individualization, however, is not as clearly related to one set of explanatory factors as leadership personalization. This group of persons who personally appear in campaign advertising is highly heterogeneous and consists of mediagenic backbenchers, second-row party VIPs, and well-funded individual candidates, all motivated by different aspects to appear in

personalized campaigning. Where mediagenic backbenchers and second-row party VIPs are mostly featured as figureheads of their party's advertising strategy to make the party's appeal more suitable for media coverage, reduce ideological complexity, and contribute to its unique selling point, self-contributing individual candidates are more motivated by cultivating a personal vote due to electoral system effects and reaping benefits of their incumbency status where applicable. This heterogeneity does not lend itself to an overarching explanatory pattern as for the rather homogenous group of leaders. The pooled complete case analysis as well as the pooled imputation robustness checks are rather inconclusive and indicate a juxtaposition of factors simultaneously influencing non-leadership individualization. Nevertheless, these factors' independent impact can at least be identified in a separate analysis of newspaper advertising's content, where party leadership and strategy planners do not have full control. There, a positive systemic influence of the electoral systems' suitability to cultivate a personal vote, as well as incumbency and ideological centrism of a party, could be identified to contribute to a greater degree of individualization in a party's communication strategy. Here we see the influence of both party leadership, motivated by the arena's perceived complexity and their own ideological centrism, as well as individual candidates motivated by the electoral system and incumbency status.

So where we can see a clear profile of resources and opportunities leading to leadership individualization, which indicates strong centralized campaign strategy planning, the more diverse motivations affecting individualization featuring non-leaders show a multifaceted and harder-to-grasp pattern of explanations for individualization.

Whether these patterns of individualization described and analyzed in the last two chapters are also visible for a more qualified approach to personalization, namely for privatization of campaign communication, will be analyzed in the next chapters.

7. Explaining General Privatization

This chapter and the next will be dedicated to the analysis of privatization of political communication. Privatization, as opposed to individualization, has a quality component to it. Campaign communication is privatized if political personae are not only mentioned or depicted, but their appearance is framed in a setting outside their political function as an office-holder or candidate. Content of political communication is defined as privatized if it is dealing with their personal traits instead of or in addition to their political positions and programs. This dimension of personalization in politics is theoretically most strongly related to mediatization. Especially commercialized media with a focus on news value, generated inter alia by emotionalization and personalization, can be expected to devote more coverage and attention to campaign communication attached to a politician as a private person, displaying role-near or even role-distant traits. Campaign planners anticipate this media logic and try to take advantage of it. I expect campaign strategists in more mediatized environments to rely more on the privatized type of personalization than in other contexts. In addition, privatization can also serve as a heuristic for less informed or overwhelmed voters, since judging persons is a task the human mind is much fitter to perform than the cumbersome process of pondering over political ideologies and issue propositions or even calculating the expected outcome of these propositions for themselves or society as a whole. Also, contests which are concentrated on political leaders should show privatization, since the policy appeals of these candidates tend to converge on a hardly distinguishable middle ground in the pursuit of the median voters and therefore privatization should provide valuable additional information for the candidates to distinguish themselves from their competitors.

Besides these more obvious predictors, the remaining explanatory factors tested for individualization also cannot be ruled out when approaching privatization. Party professionalization equips the campaign management with the necessary know-how to apply a privatization strategy, especially when the candidate is already known for being the incumbent. Populist parties should aim for presenting their figureheads as “men of the people” via

privatized images of their daily lives and centrist parties' ideologies and their candidates might be in need of privatized personalization as additional unique selling points for their bid for office in the (more or less, depending also on the electoral system) crowded center of party competition.

For these reasons, I will proceed with analyzing privatization as a campaign strategy in the same way as shown for individualization in the previous chapters. First, I will compare the descriptive patterns of privatization and in a second step analyze the results of a Bayesian beta regression of the complete cases. Then I will check the robustness of these findings with multiply imputed data and conclude from these results how privatization in campaign communication can be explained.

7.1 Distributions of General Privatization

Privatization is an important part of parties' personalization strategies across countries and levels of government both in framing and content of campaign advertising. Personalized framing is more prevalent in TV than newspaper advertising. On average, parties choose to present political personae more often than not in privatized settings (nearly 60% on average), whereas nearly none of the newspaper advertising framing is privatized. This can on the one hand be explained by the fact that TV offers the possibility to change the scenery by cuts to include privatized settings more easily. Newspaper advertisements are limited in this regard. Parties tend to choose their corporate design or neutral backgrounds for newspaper advertising, which technically cannot be amended by cuts. On the other hand, moving pictures like on TV are more suitable to lively present candidates for example pursuing a hobby than a still depicted on the one-shot imagery of a newspaper ad. Regarding content, the distribution of privatization looks different. Where on average only 20% of TV advertising content of a party deals with candidates' traits and the distribution is highly right-skewed, privatization is nearly uniformly distributed in newspaper advertising with an average proportion of 40%. This difference is most

likely due to the fact that newspaper advertising can be provided more easily than TV advertising by single candidates independently of their party's support. Especially the open-list context of elections in Switzerland and Bavaria, where privatization can offer convenient unique selling points for candidates to differentiate themselves from their party comrades sharing the same political ideology and manifesto, provides strong incentives for privatization of political communication.

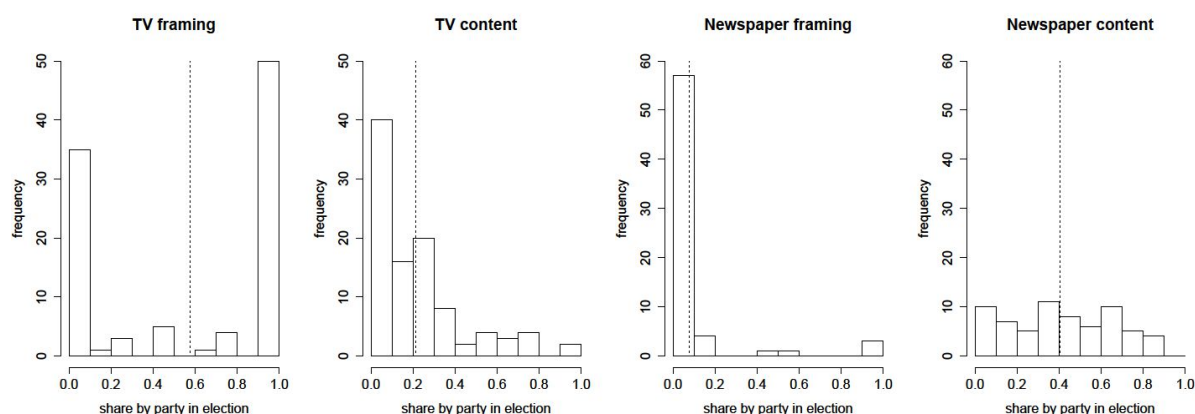


Figure 7.1 Distributions of general privatization in TV and newspaper advertising
Note: Means as dashed lines

This argument is also supported by the distribution of privatization in newspaper advertising content by countries depicted in the bottom row of Figure 7.3. Swiss parties show the highest mean level of privatized content, followed by Germany (including Bavaria) and no privatized content in Spain. By contrast, the general observation that only a few parties choose to privatize their newspaper ads' framing at all is visible throughout the countries under investigation; only some parties choose to do so and in Germany none of them (see Figure 7.3, top row).

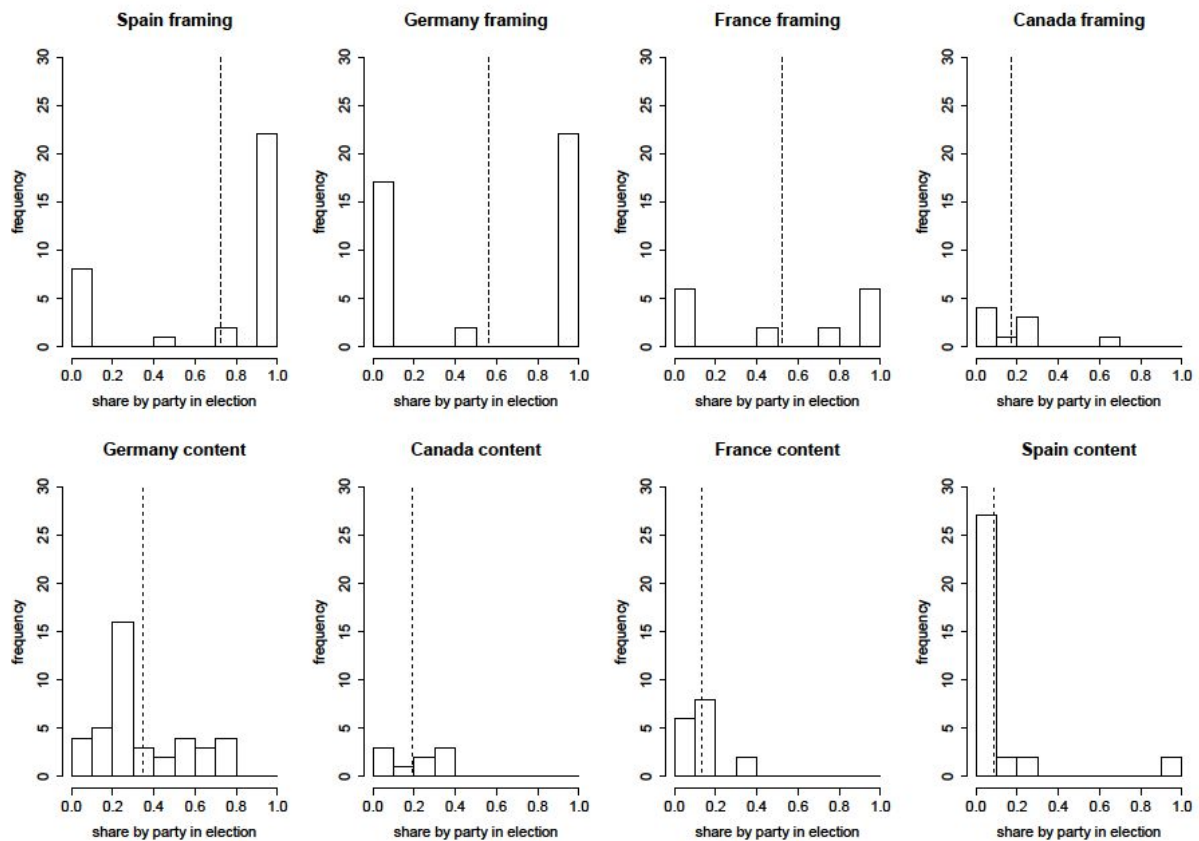


Figure 7.2 Distributions of general privatization in TV advertising; framing and content by countries

Note: Means as dashed lines

The distribution of privatization in TV advertising’s framing shows a familiar “all or nothing” pattern. The majority of parties in Spain, Germany, and France choose to privatize all or none of their TV ads’ framing. Whether this is due to the high concentration of privatization on leadership candidates only useful for parties presenting candidates for executive positions in the presidentialized systems of these countries, combined with only weak incentives for Canadian parties to present other candidates exclusively (as seen in Canadian leadership personalization patterns in the last chapter), will be tested in the multivariate analysis below. The mean proportion of privatized content in TV advertising does not vary much between the countries under investigation. Germany’s mean proportion of 30% is followed by 20% for Canada and slightly over 10% for France and under 10% for Spain. Thus, privatizing TV advertisement content appears not to be a strategy widely spread in these countries. Only

German parties seem to consistently expect electoral gains from privatizing TV advertising's content.

From these country-specific patterns we cannot infer a systematic influence of media systems or other nation-wide factors on the use of general privatization. But does this also hold true for comparing levels of government?

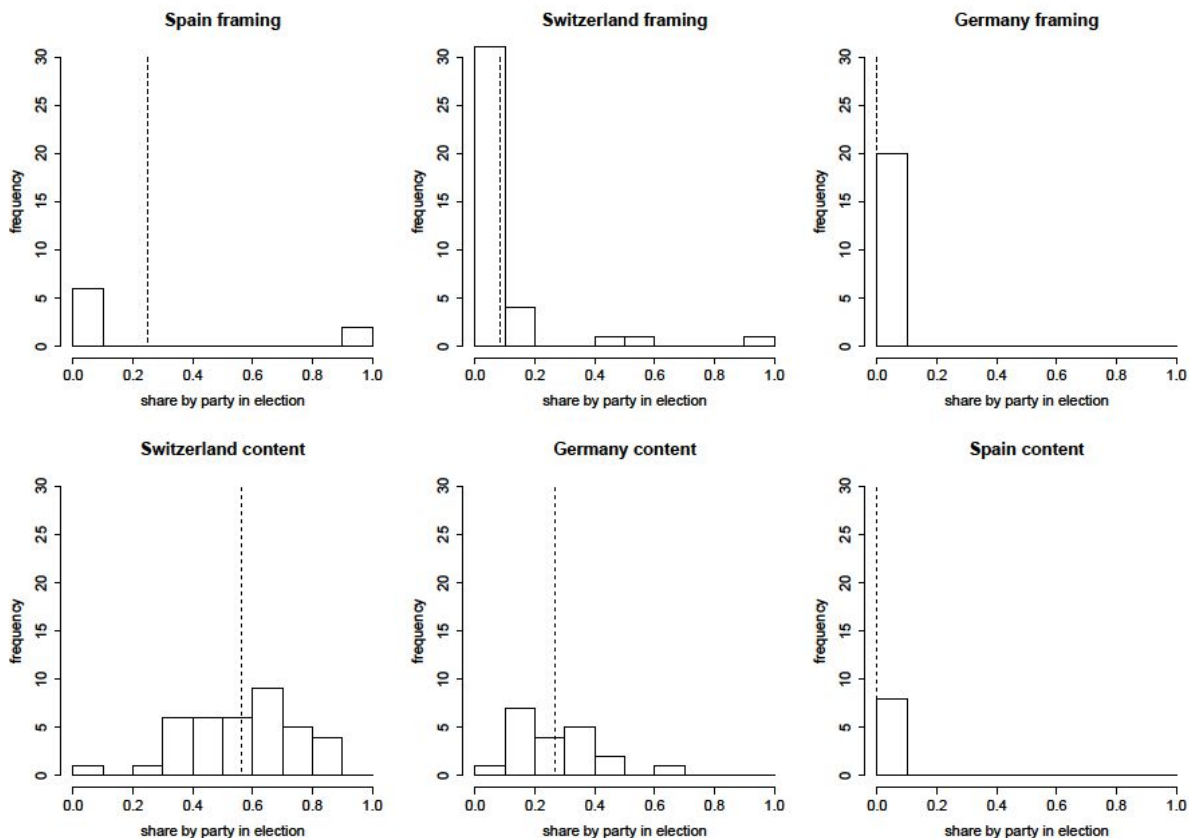


Figure 7.3 Distributions of general privatization in newspaper advertising; framing and content by countries

Note: Means as dashed lines

The distribution patterns of privatization in framing and content of TV advertising separated by levels of government presented in Figures 7.4 and 7.5 are inconclusive. Where the European level shows a clear tendency for privatization of TV content, followed by a near 50-50 split in national elections and a slight prevalence of non-privatization in regional elections, the order is turned on its head when looking at content, although with a much smaller range. The number of parties privatizing less than 40% of their TV advertising content increases from regional to national to European elections, leading to mean proportions of privatized TV content just above

30% (regional), just below 20% (national), and just over 10% (European), respectively. Parties in European elections seem to rely on privatized face recognition of popular, likable politicians in the quest for mobilization in these low-salience contests, but not on presenting their traits. In regional elections' TV advertising, this pattern is reversed with more parties opting for (nearly) no privatization than for full privatization of advertising framing, but the (unimodal but wide) range of privatization proportions in regional TV advertising content shows a more differentiated picture. The national level takes a middle ground in both framing and content of advertising. Whether this national pattern represents a standard procedure of privatization visible throughout the party families and countries will be shown with the help of the statistical analyses below; at the moment, the descriptive picture does not allow systematic conclusions.

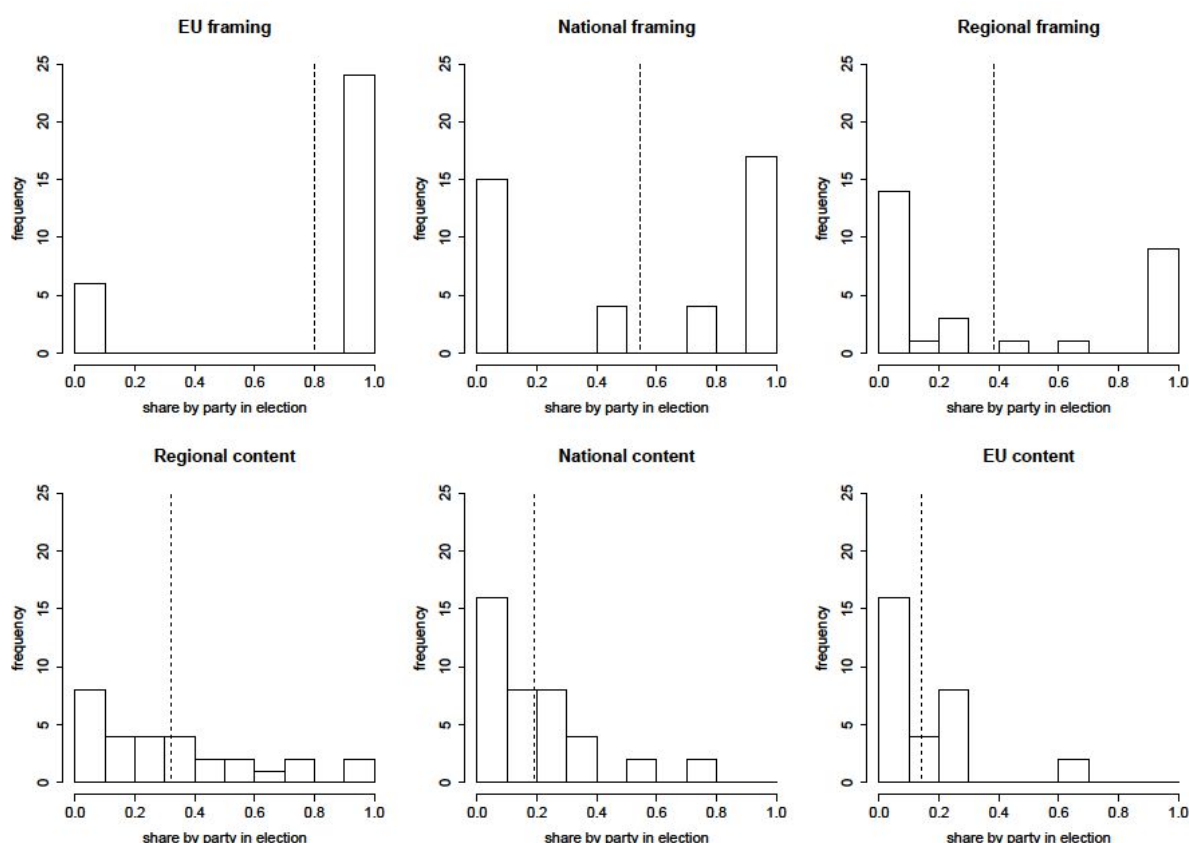


Figure 7.4 Distributions of general privatization in TV advertising; framing and content by levels of government
Note: Means as dashed lines

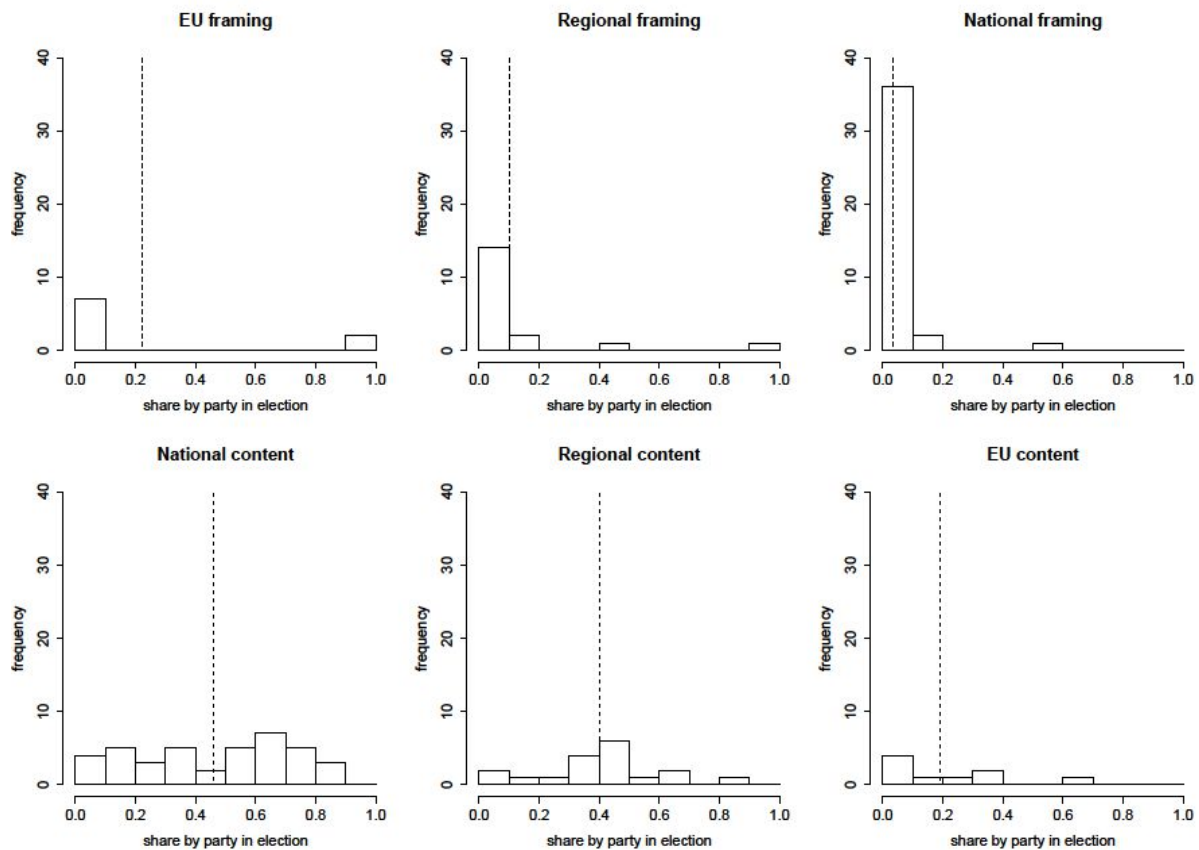


Figure 7.5 Distributions of general privatization in newspaper advertising; framing and content by levels of government
 Note: Means as dashed lines

The inspection of newspaper advertising in Figure 7.5 does not even show clear mean differences in privatized framing between levels of government. An overwhelming majority of parties nearly or entirely do not privatizing their advertisement framing in regional and national campaigns leads to average privatization levels below 10%. The European level with 20% is slightly higher, but is also based on a much smaller number of observations and therefore has to be interpreted carefully. This necessity of caution with the interpretation of the framing patterns is also encouraged by the fact that the order of levels for privatized newspaper content compared to framing is again turned on its head as for TV advertising. With regard to content, the national level shows the highest average amount of privatization, followed by regional and last European campaign strategies. Interestingly, the distributions of content's privatization proportions are much more uniform than the framing patterns would have one to expect. We can therefore conclude that although privatizing the framing of a whole newspaper ad is highly

uncommon on all levels of government, the parties competing on these levels do not at all refrain from complementing or spicing up their newspaper ads' content by presenting candidates' traits. Which factors are the most prevalent in explaining the individual party strategies' amount of privatization will be derived from the following beta regression analyses. As in the previous chapters, I will look at the complete cases first and then test the robustness of these findings by applying the same model to a set of multiply imputed datasets.

7.2 Complete Case Analysis of General Privatization

Privatization as one facet of parties' personalization strategy in election campaigning is not as prevalent as individualization. Nevertheless, we see considerable variation between and within electoral contexts and therefore have to conduct a multivariate regression analysis for this type of personalization as well. As for the other types of personalization analyzed until now, Bayesian beta regression promises the most insight into explaining the patterns of privatization described above. Therefore, I conducted a two-step analysis similar to the ones employed in the previous chapters (5 chains, 10,000 iterations of which 1,000 are burn-in both for the complete cases as well as the 20 multiple imputations, which are aggregated afterwards, including controls for countries, levels of government, and media outlet) to assess the explanatory power of the predictors theoretically expected to motivate personalization on behalf of party strategists. All tested predictors can theoretically be expected to contribute to privatization as a campaign strategy; there are hardly any factors which can be expected to theoretically contribute only marginally to privatization. When reviewing the main drivers of personalization, modernization, party competition, and institutions, we notice that all these concepts are related to privatization. However, the mediatization of political communication should be one of the main explanatory factors behind privatization. Disproportionate coverage of human interest stories with news value for an ever more commercializing media environment should motivate parties and their spin doctors to try and reap gains from this specific type of

personalization. Furthermore, the perceived complexity of politics should also generate a need for privatization as a heuristic for voters. The human mind is much better equipped to judge people than complex ideological or policy propositions and therefore responds positively to privatized information in election campaign communication, which should be anticipated by parties in the planning of their campaigns. Closely linked to this notion is the argument that privatization in a presidentialized system, where leading candidates compete for a median voter to secure their power, but are hardly distinguishable ideologically in this process, should resort to privatization, especially if they are also a member of or associated with a centrist party. Technically, a party also needs the material to start a privatized campaign. Incumbent parties offering candidates with a head start in recognition value as well as professionalized parties capable of managing a privatized campaign can be expected to systematically privatize their campaign to a larger extent than parties lacking these resources. And last but not least, populist candidates also benefit from projecting an image of themselves as “men (and women) of the people”. How many of these theoretically sound links between modernization, institutions, and party qualities however play out in the empirical investigation will be seen in the following analyses.

Table 7.1 Complete case and multiple imputation analyses of general privatization

	CC framing (1)	CC content (2)	MI framing (3)	MI content (4)
beta 0	0.70 (1.00)	-1.57 (0.94)	-0.11 (0.87)	-1.43* (0.81)
mediatization	-0.12 (0.35)	0.32 (0.28)	-0.10 (0.28)	0.35 (0.25)
complexity	-4.60* (2.61)	1.92 (2.52)	-2.16 (1.96)	-0.16 (2.00)
elec. system	0.10 (0.09)	0.06 (0.08)	0.06 (0.07)	0.08 (0.08)
presidentialization	-0.33 (0.43)	-1.08*** (0.37)	-0.28 (0.36)	-0.27 (0.32)
presidentialization * executive candidate	0.56* (0.31)	0.04 (0.26)	0.48* (0.25)	-0.05 (0.25)
executive candidate (d)	-0.89 (0.60)	0.55 (0.52)	-0.88* (0.49)	-0.11 (0.44)
centrism	-0.04 (0.06)	0.00 (0.07)	0.00 (0.06)	-0.03 (0.07)
populism (d)	-0.02 (0.42)	0.32 (0.41)	0.13 (0.33)	0.36 (0.36)
professionalization	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.03 (0.03)	0.02 (0.04)
incumbency (d)	-0.15 (0.30)	-0.22 (0.27)	-0.33 (0.25)	0.14 (0.27)
France (d)	-0.04 (0.90)	1.38* (0.78)	-0.12 (1.09)	1.89* (1.12)
Germany (d)	-0.20 (0.75)	1.72** (0.70)	0.70 (0.76)	0.98 (0.75)
Germany * newspaper (d)	0.14 (1.15)	-0.86 (0.98)	-0.37 (1.00)	-1.22 (0.95)
Spain (d)	-1.72 (1.56)	-0.37 (1.48)	-0.03 (1.34)	-1.18 (1.28)
Spain * newspaper (d)	0.42 (1.23)	-0.55 (1.02)	-0.14 (1.05)	-0.87 (0.92)
newspaper (d)	-1.52 (1.09)	0.25 (0.93)	-0.78 (0.98)	0.79 (0.90)
European (d)	1.07 (0.91)	-1.45* (0.79)	0.66 (0.67)	0.52 (0.64)
Regional (d)	-0.15 (0.42)	-0.01 (0.34)	-0.13 (0.32)	0.16 (0.32)
N	143	143	254	254

Notes: Mean posterior beta regression coefficients with logit link, standard deviations in parentheses, reference country is Canada, reference level is national, * credible interval > 90%, ** c.i. > 95%, *** c.i. > 99%

Interestingly enough, we don't find confirmation for any of the theoretical arguments presented above in the complete case analysis of general privatization as a campaign strategy. When looking at the results of the analysis in column 1 of Table 7.1, we must concede that the only strong significant effect, the one associated with complexity, points in the opposite direction of what we expected. Holding all other variables constant, a .1 increase in perceived complexity by the electorate results in a .46 decrease in the logged odds ratio of a party competing in this electorate's arena to privatize the framing of their TV advertisements. This means if only 10% of the population increase their agreement with the statement that politics is so complicated that people like them do not know what is going on by one point on a 0 to 10 scale, the probability of a party privatizing its campaign's content in this arena drops on average from 67% to 56%, a decrease of 11 percentage points. Of course this abstract notion is dependent on a lot of assumptions of neither party competition nor levels of mediatization or other contextual factors changing, but it illustrates the severity of this effect going against its theoretically postulated impact on privatization in TV advertising framing.

The second significant effect, the interaction between presidentialization and running an executive candidate, points in the predicted direction. However, its composite effect taking the main effects of presidentialization and running an executive candidate into account does not lend unequivocal support to the interaction hypothesis 5.2. When calculating the composite effect of the interaction and its constitutive main effects, the change in probability of general privatization in TV advertising framing from not presenting a candidate in a system defined as fully presidentialized here (directly elected executive, strong executive, debate) versus doing so elicits a change from a 43% to a 62% probability of privatization, holding all other variables constant. However, this effect quickly shrinks to a difference between 57% (with candidate) and 51% (without candidate) for averagely presidentialized systems and is even inverted for systems with only one component of presidentialization (51% vs. 59%).

All the other predictors tested for influence on general privatization in campaign advertising framing prove not to contribute systematically to its explanation. Also, the separate analyses of TV and newspaper advertising do not show additional effects of the variables under investigation here (Appendix, Table A.7). The separate TV analysis shows no effects at all covering a credible interval over 90%, whereas the separate newspaper analysis shows negative influence of complexity as well as executive candidates, which are only partly countered by its positive interaction with presidentialization, and a strong influence of country-specific idiosyncrasies for Germany and Spain, as well as the European level.

Also in advertising content, the predictor variables do not influence the levels of general privatization as expected (see Table 7.1, column 2). The only significant effect is a negative influence of presidentialization on general privatization. Its main effect predicts a mean drop in the probability of using privatization from 7% (only one component of presidentialization present) to under 1% (fully presidentialized). This drop is even aggravated (11% to 1.5%) when looking at the composite effect of presidentialization interacted with parties running an executive candidate. Part of the explanation for this pattern might lie in the significant confounding effects of country dummies for France and Germany, as well as European elections, all indicating the presence of idiosyncrasies (for example specific candidates especially respected, cherished or popular with the people) not covered by the theoretical predictor variables in the model. Disaggregating the analysis into separate analyses for TV and newspapers (Appendix, Table A.7) sheds a little more light on the underlying relations of the pooled analysis. While the TV analysis does not show any significant associations of predictors with the levels of general privatization, the negative effect of presidentialization and European elections is mainly due to its strong negative effect on newspaper content privatization. The positive influence of running an executive candidate and having a centrist ideological position on parties' use of privatization found in newspaper advertisements is not reflected in the pooled model.

Generally speaking, the complete case analyses do not provide robust evidence for any one of the proposed factors having a consistent effect on general privatization. Even though the interaction of presidentialization with running an executive candidate systematically increases the level of privatization of a party's campaign, the negative effect of presidentialization on privatizing newspaper advertising's content contradicts this finding. If those rather meager results are a result of listwise deletion, or if they prevail after a robustness check, will be shown in the multiple imputation analysis in the following section.

7.3 Imputation Analysis of General Privatization

The results from the pooled analyses of 20 multiply imputed datasets presented in columns 3 and 4 of Table 7.1 do not offer much additional information. In this robustness check, the interaction of presidentialization with running an executive candidate in combination with its constituent main effects predicts an increase in probability of a party privatizing its advertising framing from 31% (only one component of presidentialization present) to 40% (fully presidentialized). However, for parties not running a candidate, only an insignificant negative effect of presidentialization prevails. This pattern is mainly induced by the newspaper cases, although supported in part by TV cases as well, according to the separate analysis of these two media outlets (see Appendix, Table A.8). In the pooled imputation analysis of privatized content, no significant effect prevails. Although the unexpected negative effect of presidentialization is visible in a separate newspaper analysis and a negative interaction effect of presidentialization and executive candidates, combined with a negative main effect for candidates, can be found in TV analysis, they are not systematically strong enough to influence the pooled analysis of multiply imputed datasets. Whether this non-finding can be explained by counteracting influences on privatization for leadership and non-leadership candidates will be examined in chapter 8.

7.4 Discussion

Although I theoretically expected all of the included parameters to contribute independently to the explanation of privatization in campaign communication, the empirical results did not show robust associations between operationalizations of modernization, institutions, and party competition. In general, the fact that privatization is a much more qualified approach to personalization leads to an overall lower level of its use and therefore also a reduced variance in its occurrence when compared to individualization. The benchmark for an ad or a quasi-sentence to be counted as privatized does not only depend on a politician simply appearing, but also on an intentional addition of privatized context or information to it. Although we do not see systematic evidence for it in the pooled general analysis, we have indications from previous research (Holtz-Bacha, 2002; Gibson & Römmele, 2009) that fulfilling these additional information demands might be too challenging for parties not equipped with the necessary staff or funding. We will find indications for this notion in the analysis of leadership privatization in the next chapter. However, the variance in levels of general privatization visible between and within electoral arenas could not be systematically attributed to a robust set of predictors. Case-specific idiosyncrasies like the suitability of a candidate for privatization (interesting career or hobbies, good looks, a presentable family, etc.), which could not be covered by or subsumed under incumbency, might have a much larger influence than systematic variation of the institutional and media environment parties face, as well as their qualities like professionalization, or their respective position in the ideological competition. What we can derive from the results in this chapter is the notion that executive candidates, who are most of the time part of the leadership of a party, can and do influence at least parts of privatization in campaign communication. Whether this special subset of candidates elicits different demands and readiness of their respective parties to work more with privatization will be the guiding question of the next chapter.

8. Explaining Leadership Privatization

In the age of celebrity politics, party or political movement leaders are a theoretically and empirically crucial subset of political personae, which not only attract a considerable amount of media attention and campaign coverage in general (see chapters 4 and 6), but also are highly suitable for privatization. Domestic stories or other insights into the private lives and characters of the rich and famous are much more attractive for voters and the media than a backbenchers' character, hobby, or private life (unless it has generated a veritable scandal) and therefore, also in campaign strategies, privatization concentrated on leadership makes up for a large proportion of privatization in general. Privatization aims to make the leadership candidates more approachable and likable, trying to capitalize on their favorable traits or other role-near or role-distant attributes. This strategy should be most employed, as theoretically stated for general privatization above, in highly mediatized campaigns, and in contexts where people are also looking for a heuristic to cut short their information costs, i.e. in a political environment perceived as complex. It should also be employed most by professionalized parties with an apparatus capable of implementing a communication strategy of privatization directed at a professional media environment and able to assess and prevent its potential backlash. In addition to these explanatory factors expected to influence privatization in general (see previous chapter), the level of institutional presidentialization and its interplay with parties running a candidate for an executive position, especially for incumbents, and populism should all have a distinct additional effect on leadership privatization. Whether and to what extent centrism and the electoral system's general suitability for PVEAs also influence leadership privatization will also be investigated in this chapter. For the analysis of this least common type of personalization strategies in election campaigns, I will also first look at the empirical distributions of the mean levels of leadership privatization by media outlet, countries, and levels of government, followed

by the established analyses of complete cases and the robustness checks of its results via multiple imputations.

8.1 Distributions of Leadership Privatization

As expected, the leadership privatization strategy is the empirically least common facet of personalization under investigation in this project. To classify an advertisement's framing or content as privatized and concentrated on leadership, it has to fulfil additional quality criteria in comparison with individualization, namely dealing with political personae outside their functions as mere office-holders or their traits, while its focus on a theoretically and empirically important yet small subset of politicians, namely leaders, decreases its occurrence in the sampled election campaigns even further.

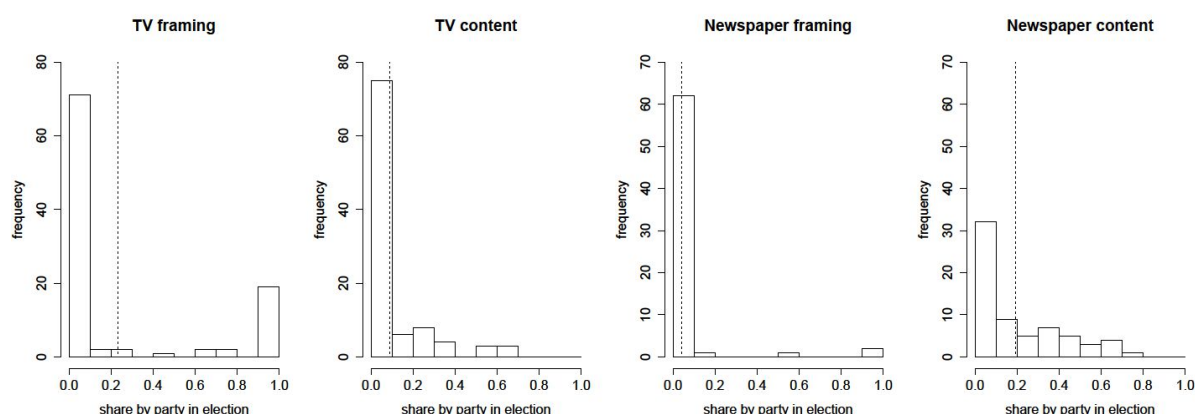


Figure 8.1 Distributions of leadership privatization in TV and newspaper advertising

Note: Means as dashed lines

Figure 8.1 shows that the vast majority of parties use no leadership privatization in their campaign advertisements at all. Especially in TV content and newspaper framing only a slight minority of parties seem to think that presenting their leaders' private qualities is a promising strategy at all to appeal to voters, resulting in mean leadership privatization levels below 10% in those two categories. For TV framing and newspaper content, the picture looks a bit different. On average parties personalize one quarter of their appeal concentrated on leadership as a framing strategy in their TV spots, which is still a clear minority, but shows enough variance

which might be systematically explainable in the remainder of this chapter. In newspaper content, although only a mean 20% of content is personalized, the distribution of leadership personalization shows cases on several levels, which can be attributed to different choices in campaign strategy by parties.

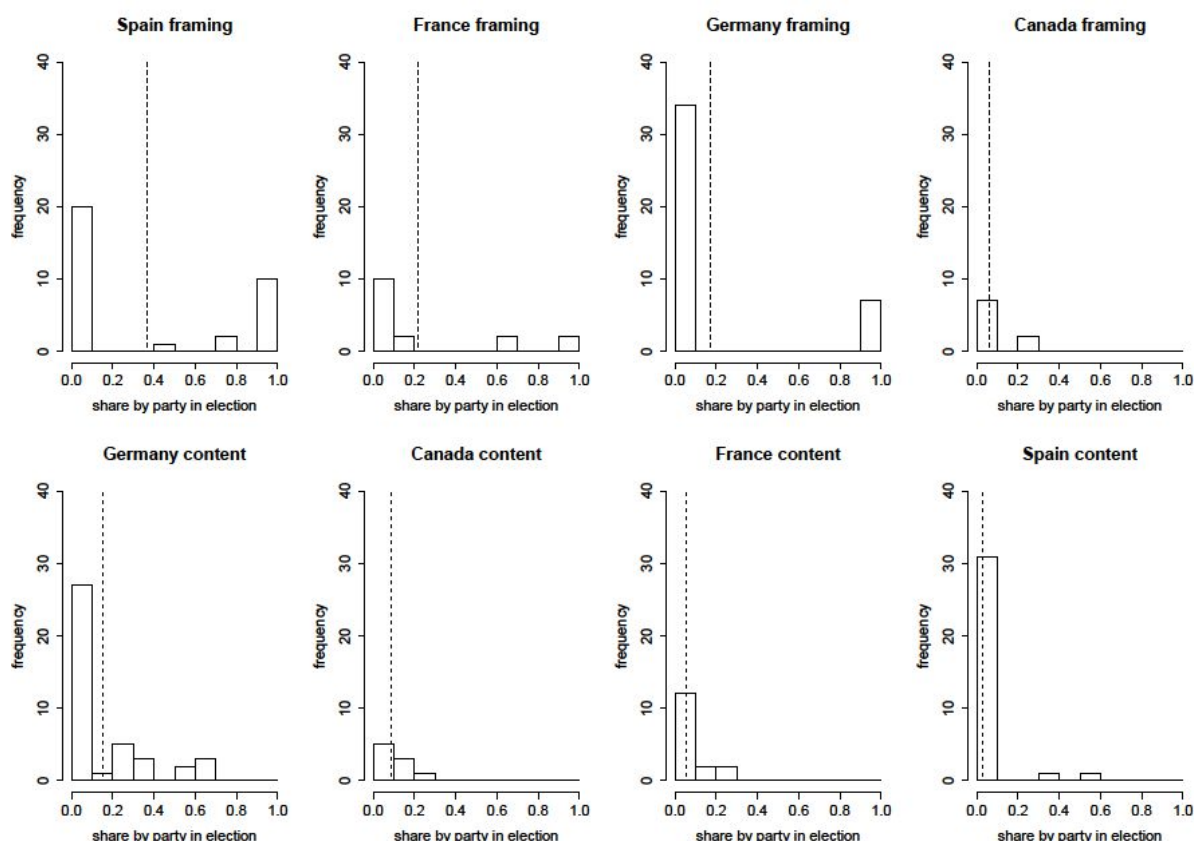


Figure 8.2 Distributions of leadership privatization in TV advertising; framing and content by countries
Note: Means as dashed lines

In Figure 8.2, as seen in general privatization, most cases of leadership privatization of the entire TV advertising framing are observed in the presidentialized proportional representation systems of Spain and Germany. Their institutional concentration of personalization on the party leadership, which it does not have to share with district candidates, produces leadership privatization especially concentrated on the main parties' leading candidates for chief executive office. France's and especially Canada's party strategists very rarely use this instrument. Contentwise, however, only Germany sticks out with a mean proportion of over 15% mean

leadership privatization. All other countries' mean proportions are below 10% and it is questionable whether the outliers over 10% will be systematically explainable.

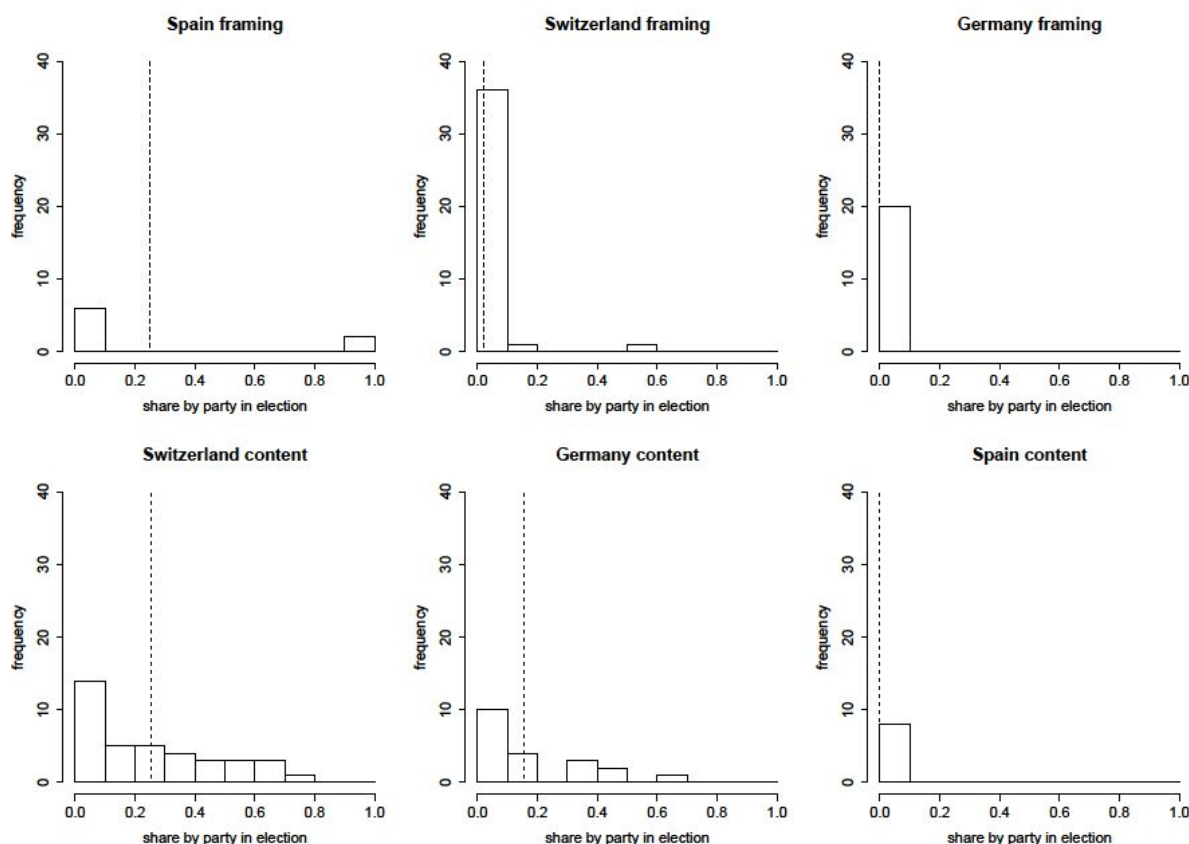


Figure 8.3 Distributions of leadership privatization in newspaper advertising; framing and content by countries

Note: Means as dashed lines

In newspaper advertising (see Figure 8.3), Spain shows a similar pattern as on TV: More parties are using no leadership privatization than full leadership privatization in framing, however contentwise, leadership privatization is completely absent in Spain. In German newspaper advertisements, no privatized framing at all is recognizable, not even by parties running chief executive chancellor or prime-minister candidates. The German distribution of privatized newspaper content is similarly right-skewed as on TV, but not as dominated by the non-privatizing cases. Switzerland shows a new pattern. Although privatized leadership framing is virtually absent, Swiss newspaper advertising campaigns show the largest mean proportion of leadership privatization of the countries under investigation (over one quarter). Apparently,

Swiss campaign planners do not dare to change the newspaper advertisings' framing away from a neutral, professional, or corporate design background, but are well aware of the potential gains of talking about their party leaders' traits (as they also do for their other candidates).

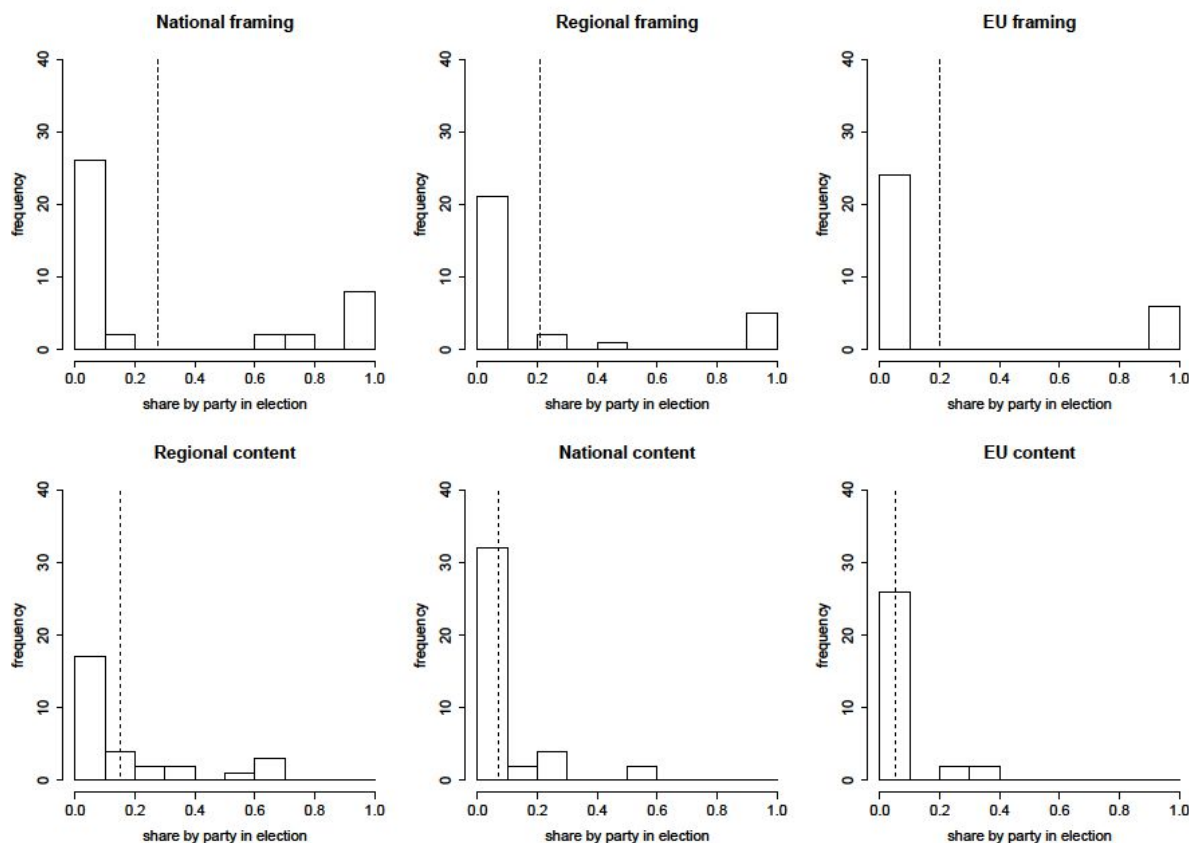


Figure 8.4 Distributions of leadership privatization in TV advertising; framing and content by levels of government
Note: Means as dashed lines

When looking at the differences of mean leadership privatization and the cases' distributions between levels of government, we see hardly any systematic variation between national, regional, and European campaigns on TV. The levels and patterns of privatized leadership framing show a ratio of about 5:1 of parties not privatizing at all vs. privatizing all TV advertising framing (with a nearly negligible amount of “outliers” in between) for all levels of government. TV advertising content only shows some leadership privatization on the regional level (a mere mean 15%), while on the national and European level an absence of leadership privatization clearly dominates the scene. In addition, for both TV categories framing and

content, the mean proportions are so close together that we can conclude that level of government does not seem to have any explanatory power on its own when it comes to leadership privatization on TV.

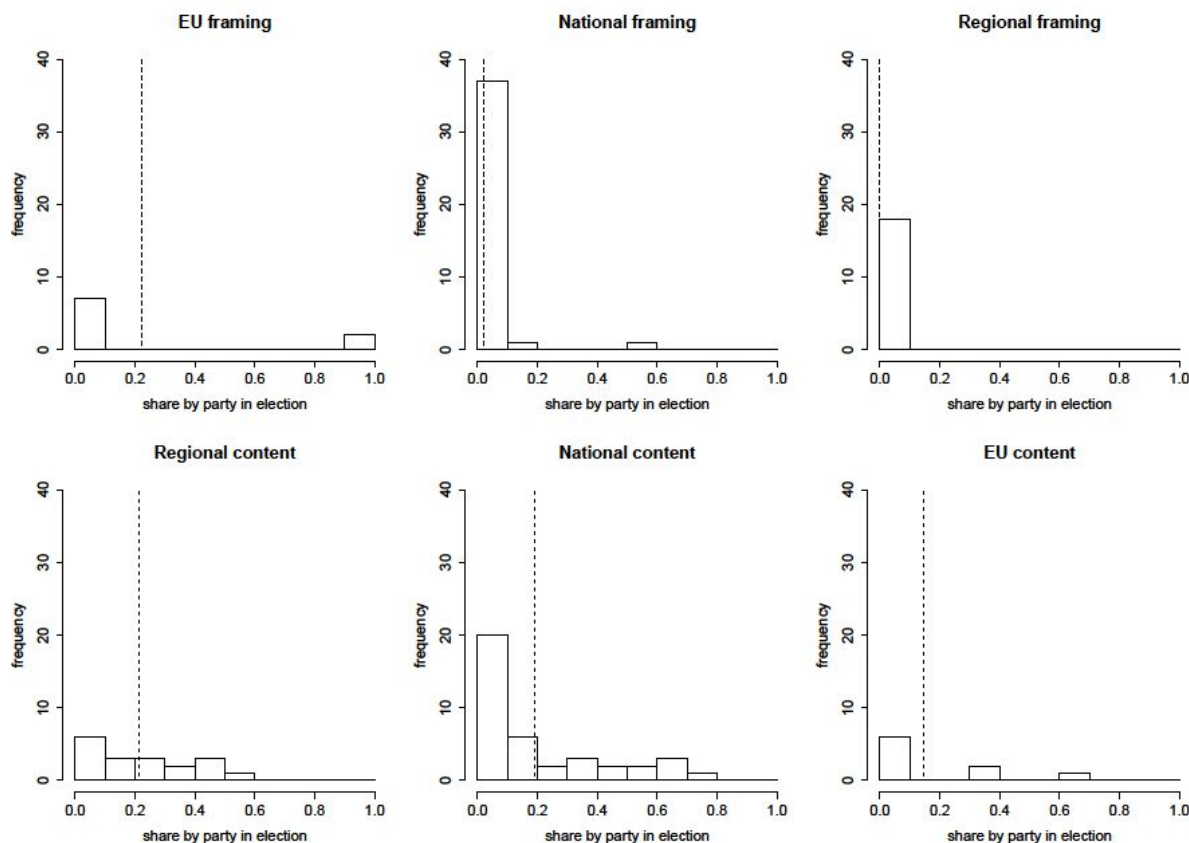


Figure 8.5 Distributions of leadership privatization in newspaper advertising; framing and content by levels of government
Note: Means as dashed lines

For newspaper advertising, the situation is similar. Only a small number of parties under investigation here use privatized leadership framing at all, leading to rather coincidental differences in mean levels of privatization between European, national, and regional campaigns. Contentwise, the levels of government do not differ a lot either. Although the regional cases' distribution is slightly less right-skewed than the national and European ones, their mean values are all located around 20%. So we can conclude the same for newspaper advertisements that we have observed before in the case of TV leadership privatization: The expected systematic influence of levels of government on the amount of leadership personalization used by parties

should be very limited. Leadership privatization, even more than general privatization, can therefore be expected to vary by partisan factors or institutional variation between elections, but not by second-order or “closeness to the people” patterns, which would predict visibly higher mean levels in regional or national elections, respectively.

Whether we can derive explanatory approaches to patterns of leadership privatization from the limited variance presented in this section and which predictors are most useful in explaining these patterns will be shown in the following section, again by beta regression analysis of complete cases and robustness checks of multiply imputed datasets.

8.2 Complete Case Analysis of Leadership Privatization

As in the previous analyses of the facets of personalization in campaign communication, I will also rely on a full model including all potential predictors of personalization and consequently leadership privatization. The results in Table 8.1, columns 1 and 2, again stem from a Bayesian beta regression model based on the 143 complete cases available, using 5 chains with 10,000 iterations each, 1,000 of which were discarded as burn-in. As stated earlier in this chapter, and similarly in the chapter dealing with leadership individualization, I am expecting a strong and consistent influence of institutional factors strengthening the chief executive on leadership privatization usage as a campaign strategy, even more so for parties running executive candidates. Also, mediatization is expected to contribute considerably to leadership privatization, as should do populism and party professionalization. The empirical results, however, only show two of the expected effects: A positive relationship of party professionalization with privatization of leadership-related advertising content and a positive effect on privatized leadership framing for parties in presidentialized systems running a candidate, but which only kicks in at a high level of presidentialization. The positive significant interaction effect on framing for parties running executive candidates in presidentialized systems, which we have been observing also for individualization, does not come as a surprise.

Having a candidate for executive office available in a system that vests substantial amounts of power in said executive clearly constitutes a reason for campaign strategists to promote these candidates not only with their political views or as representatives of a party, but also with their private qualities. When we look closer at the composite effect of the interaction of presidentialization with executive candidate and the respective main effects, we see that the positive effect of running a candidate indeed depends strongly on the level of presidentialization. For a fully presidentialized system (and all other covariates held at their means and the dummies at zero), running a candidate changes the probability of leadership privatization in the framing of a party's campaign communication from 23% to 39%. However, in a moderately presidentialized system, running a candidate only increases said probability from 28% to 30%, and in systems with low levels of presidentialization, running a candidate even has a negative effect on leadership privatization (22% with candidate, 34% without). Similar patterns of influence on individualized leadership framing can also be found in both separate analyses of TV and newspaper advertising (see Appendix, Table A.9). The effects of the other predictors in the separate models are inconclusive, only populism has a positive effect on leadership privatization framing in newspapers, but this is cancelled out by an unexpected negative effect of populism on framing of TV advertising. So from the most stable effect of the present analyses we can conclude that the presence of a candidate alone does not make party strategists increase the proportion of leadership privatization in their party's communication strategy, but the spoils to be gained from doing so, the executive offices on the line, have to be sufficiently valuable. Leadership privatization obviously comes at a cost.

Although we do not see equivalent institutional effects on leadership privatization in advertising content as we have done for framing (on the contrary: We even find a negative main effect of presidentialization, which is not substantially affected by its interaction with running an executive candidate), another finding also points into the direction that leadership privatization requires preconditions besides executive candidates that not all parties have at their disposal.

Party professionalization¹⁵ has a significant impact on parties' decisions on how much to privatize the content of their campaign communication. From a rationalist resource perspective, which assumes that a well-made and effective privatization campaign is costly, large, affluent, and well-staffed parties can more easily shoulder the demands for successful implementation of such a strategy, which makes it more likely for them to choose it. With a professionalized apparatus of public relations staff and disposable funds, it is easier for professionalized parties to coordinate their communication efforts in paid space (as seen here) and earned space, which is essential to creating a favorable image for their party leadership. Furthermore, this professional environment can also more easily provide all the necessary preparation and training needed for the candidate himself to make most out of his public appearances. The professionalization effect is visible for both newspaper and TV advertising (see Appendix, Table A.9). However, it is more pronounced in newspapers, where it is also complemented by positive effects of mediatization and complexity, whereas centrism systematically decreases the amount of leadership privatization used in newspaper campaign communication content.

¹⁵ In the complete case analyses professionalization is measured approximately by a party's vote share, which is reasonably correlated ($r=.58$) with the sum of the campaign budget per 10 voters and the number of full-time party employees per 1 million voters used in the imputation analysis.

Table 8.1 Complete case and multiple imputation analyses of leadership privatization

	CC framing (1)	CC content (2)	MI framing (3)	MI content (4)
beta 0	-0.33 (1.04)	-2.83*** (0.90)	-0.33 (0.83)	-2.81*** (0.71)
mediatization	0.03 (0.33)	-0.01 (0.28)	-0.09 (0.25)	0.08 (0.21)
complexity	-2.71 (2.72)	1.66 (2.30)	-2.35 (1.89)	0.75 (1.54)
elec. system	0.10 (0.09)	-0.05 (0.08)	0.06 (0.07)	-0.01 (0.07)
presidentialization	-0.30 (0.41)	-0.67** (0.37)	-0.34 (0.32)	-0.41 (0.27)
presidentialization * executive candidate	0.73** (0.31)	0.24 (0.25)	0.54** (0.24)	0.25 (0.20)
executive candidate (d)	-1.32** (0.60)	-0.10 (0.48)	-0.87* (0.45)	-0.06 (0.38)
centrism	0.00 (0.07)	-0.09 (0.06)	0.02 (0.06)	-0.07 (0.05)
populism (d)	-0.28 (0.42)	0.27 (0.35)	-0.28 (0.31)	0.13 (0.27)
professionalization	0.01 (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.05** (0.02)
incumbency (d)	-0.09 (0.29)	-0.30 (0.25)	-0.13 (0.24)	-0.19 (0.23)
France (d)	-0.10 (0.87)	0.72 (0.76)	0.19 (0.83)	0.03 (1.12)
Germany (d)	-0.30 (0.75)	0.64 (0.69)	-0.35 (0.70)	0.57 (0.62)
Germany * newspaper (d)	0.51 (1.11)	-0.32 (0.94)	0.95 (0.92)	-0.76 (0.80)
Spain (d)	-0.82 (1.64)	0.03 (1.40)	-0.87 (1.29)	0.06 (1.02)
Spain * newspaper (d)	0.86 (1.21)	-0.68 (1.03)	0.88 (1.01)	-0.73 (0.80)
newspaper (d)	-0.97 (1.07)	0.55 (0.93)	-1.09 (0.90)	0.78 (0.77)
European (d)	0.48 (0.84)	-0.57 (0.73)	0.10 (0.56)	-0.14 (0.52)
Regional (d)	0.09 (0.42)	0.53 (0.32)	-0.03 (0.30)	0.26 (0.25)
N	143	143	254	254

Notes: Mean posterior beta regression coefficients with logit link, standard deviations in parentheses, reference country is Canada, reference level is national, * credible interval > 90%, ** c.i. > 95%, *** c.i. > 99%

So after reviewing the complete cases' evidence for leadership privatization we can ascertain that a resource-based approach also best explains parties' choices for a privatization strategy concentrated on leadership, as we have seen for leadership individualization. Neither a party's position in the political competition, which might require additional information or appeal to be communicated for the unique selling point, nor context modernization (although complexity and mediatization do influence newspaper content) plays the decisive role here. It is the interplay of presidentialized institutions with availability of an executive candidate as a leadership figure and carrier of privatized communication (especially for framing), and the financial and professional resources of a party to carry out a privatized campaign (especially for content), which determine levels of leadership privatization in election campaign communication most consistently.

But as we have seen in chapter 4, privatization is by no means limited to party leadership. Only a minority of parties, mostly found in Spain or on the European level, limits their privatization efforts in campaign communication to trying to capitalize on a favorable image of their leadership alone. Also non-leadership candidates' traits and private images promise electoral success for the parties and candidates able to effectively apply them. Privatized information can complement, amplify, or compensate for a lack of ideological appeal. And since judging people is easier for the human mind than judging policies, it is very suitable as a heuristic for making a decision about whom to vote for. Furthermore, presenting privatized information of partisans besides the leadership can work as a concession to the different wings or subgroups of the party, and this comes with a potential gain in widening its appeal to subgroups of the electorate. Also, presenting privatized party dissenters at the ideological fringes of a party can counter populist claims of cartelization and increase a party's unique selling point without compromising its overall centrist policy position. And in addition to these centrally steered strategic reasons for non-leadership privatization, one also has to take the motivated and well-funded individual candidates facing an open list into account, whose motivation to cultivate a personal vote we

already discussed in chapter 6 when talking about non-leadership individualization. These candidates can and should use privatization to cultivate a personal vote, which is mainly motivated by party-system characteristics, namely open lists paired with large district magnitudes. Therefore, I expect the factors structuring and measuring party and candidate competition to be most prominent in explaining non-leadership privatization: Electoral systems with open lists, which pit party comrades against each other and increase the necessity to create a unique selling point via a personal vote for individual candidates, should produce more non-leadership privatization than electoral systems based on closed lists. This effect of electoral systems, paired with the overall perceived complexity of politics in an arena should also motivate party strategists of all parties in the same situation to offer a similar amount of privatization as a heuristic as well as a media-friendly form of communication. To account for intra-party variance in non-leadership privatization, I expect centrism and party professionalization as well as incumbency status to play a major role.

The empirical explanatory power of factors determining if a party also uses privatization to promote their legislative candidates further down the list can be read from Table 8.2. Consistent patterns explaining the use of privatized framing in advertising non-leadership candidates, however, cannot be found in the complete case analysis presented in column 1. The separate analyses of TV and newspaper advertising also fail to produce the expected patterns of explaining non-leadership privatization in advertising framing (see Appendix, Table A.11). This is most likely due to the high level of diversity in this non-leadership group of candidates subsumed into one analysis, leading to competing mechanisms for explaining the rather small overall variance in levels of non-leadership individualization between the party sections under investigation here.

The empirical palette of candidates in this category includes selected mediagenic party soldiers for illustration purposes, ministers from the second row, and candidates investing a considerable amount of private money into promoting their individual candidacy independently of the party

apparatus, but not independent of its ideology and label. Where professionalization and the resulting elaborate public relations tactics might play the decisive role for including a backbencher candidate as a mere character for advertising a party's concern for the "common man", depicting private pictures of popular and well-known ministers or vice-leaders of the party should be motivated more by a party's need for enhancing their unique selling point derived from ideological centrality. And if an individual candidate's self-paid privatized picture is used to try and convey this candidate's appeal to the voters, the electoral system with small districts or open lists can be expected to contribute most to the decision of that candidate to privatize his or her advertising's framing¹⁶, shaping his party's overall level of non-leadership privatization. However, all these effects taken for themselves do not systematically contribute to an explanation of non-leadership privatization in advertising framing. Also, as more and more of these decentralized campaign efforts of individual candidates are now moved to electronic and social media, the present analysis based on TV and newspaper advertising struggles with the establishment of systematic predictors of non-leadership privatization, even aggravated by facing this diverse category of non-leaders.

¹⁶ The latter pattern is especially visible in Switzerland, where candidate-centered support committees play a large and decentralized role in campaign financing, therefore shaping a party's overall appearance in the media's paid space.

Table 8.2 Complete case and multiple imputation analyses of non-leadership privatization

	CC framing (1)	CC content (2)	MI framing (3)	MI content (4)
beta 0	-0.12 (1.08)	-1.38 (0.82)	-1.19 (0.83)	-1.05 (0.77)
mediatization	-0.13 (0.33)	0.11 (0.27)	0.05 (0.26)	0.15 (0.23)
complexity	-2.18 (2.77)	-2.36 (2.08)	0.17 (1.86)	-1.94 (1.62)
elec. system	0.00 (0.09)	0.12* (0.07)	0.00 (0.07)	0.09 (0.07)
presidentialization	-0.07 (0.41)	-0.11 (0.34)	0.09 (0.32)	0.17 (0.31)
presidentialization * executive candidate	-0.13 (0.30)	-0.24 (0.26)	-0.01 (0.26)	-0.37 (0.23)
executive candidate (d)	0.35 (0.60)	0.10 (0.49)	-0.13 (0.51)	-0.20 (0.42)
centrism	-0.06 (0.08)	0.04 (0.07)	-0.04 (0.06)	0.00 (0.06)
populism (d)	0.21 (0.41)	0.49 (0.37)	0.33 (0.32)	0.32 (0.34)
professionalization	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)	0.03 (0.03)	0.00 (0.03)
incumbency (d)	-0.07 (0.30)	0.61** (0.25)	-0.25 (0.24)	0.47* (0.25)
France (d)	0.04 (0.87)	0.19 (0.75)	-0.33 (1.07)	1.01 (0.92)
Germany (d)	-0.31 (0.77)	0.04 (0.64)	0.68 (0.74)	-0.16 (0.65)
Germany * newspaper (d)	-0.01 (1.17)	-0.74 (0.93)	-1.04 (0.97)	-0.37 (0.93)
Spain (d)	-1.30 (1.66)	-2.11* (1.25)	0.61 (1.27)	-2.08* (1.11)
Spain * newspaper (d)	-0.20 (1.22)	0.21 (0.95)	-0.78 (0.98)	0.11 (0.89)
newspaper (d)	-0.75 (1.12)	-0.48 (0.86)	0.30 (0.94)	-0.17 (0.86)
European (d)	0.70 (0.87)	-0.16 (0.75)	0.77 (0.63)	0.74 (0.65)
Regional (d)	-0.21 (0.42)	-0.09 (0.33)	-0.01 (0.29)	0.05 (0.30)
N	143	143	254	254

Notes: Mean posterior beta regression coefficients with logit link, standard deviations in parentheses, reference country is Canada, reference level is national, * credible interval > 90%, ** c.i. > 95%, *** c.i. > 99%

Yet when inspecting the complete cases' advertising content in column 2 of Table 8.2, we indeed find scattered evidence for the theoretical expectations presented above. The electoral system's conduciveness for personal vote-earning attributes, with which non-leaders have to deal immediately, unlike their indirectly or separately elected leaders, has a measurable independent effect on a party's probability of having privatized campaign content tailored to their non-leaders. Whether this is intended by a centrally organized strategy group in the party's headquarters or is a by-product of motivated and invested individual candidates cannot be conclusively verified from this analysis, but theoretical considerations point to the latter. Also, parties which are part of the sitting government tend to privatize more content ascribed to their non-leadership candidates than opposition parties. This pattern is even more pronounced in the separate analysis of newspaper advertisement's privatized content attributed to non-leaders. There, we also find significant positive effects of programmatic centrism as well as populism, but a negative effect of party's professionalization. So the theoretical expectations of open lists combined with large district magnitudes motivating non-leaders to privatize their advertising strategy is at least confirmed for content, as well as a larger proportion of governing parties' privatized advertising content due to a larger pool of more easily recognizable candidates for incumbents.

Again, when taking the explanatory patterns for leadership and non-leadership privatization together, not all hypotheses proposed to influence personalization do find support for this facet of personalization. Mediatization, theoretically a strong predictor of privatization, surprisingly did not show an influence on leadership or on non-leadership privatization in this complete case analysis, and neither did complexity. The need for media appeal or heuristics leadership privatization could supply apparently is satisfied with its application to executive candidates in presidentialized systems by a professionalized party apparatus. The electoral system, by contrast, showed its hypothesized effect on increasing non-leadership privatization. The more the electoral formula requires personal vote earning attributes for a candidate to be successful,

the more these attributes were transported via non-leadership privatization. Ideological centrism as well as populism did also not contribute independently to explaining leadership or non-leadership privatization in the pooled analysis. The effect of ideological centrism based on the need for an enhanced unique selling point most likely is covered up in a similar way by the interaction of presidentialization and running an executive candidate as mediatization's and complexity's. Populism only has the hypothesized positive effect on personalization in the subdomain of non-leadership privatization in newspaper content, which is not systematically visible in the pooled analysis. Finally, privatization of leadership and non-leadership incumbents shows a similar pattern as for individualization. Where no independent influence of incumbency can be traced for leadership privatization, non-leadership candidates expect to profit from their face recognition and track record known to the public and therefore privatize their appearance in advertising content accordingly. As for leadership individualization, the non-influence of incumbency on leadership privatization is not surprising insofar as opposition party strategists most likely in the course of a pre-campaign or via other communication efforts try to ensure that the potential deficit in popularity of their leadership candidates are evened out before the campaign starts and therefore not allow the incumbents to systematically gain from their respective popularity advantage.

If the findings presented in this chapter are robust or a product of listwise deletion used for the complete case analysis will be checked one last time by analyzing multiple imputed datasets for all relevant parties.

8.3 Imputation Analysis of Leadership Privatization

The robustness check employed for the leadership (and non-leadership) privatization patterns found in the complete case analysis above follows the same procedure as in the chapters before. The same multivariate Bayesian beta regression analysis with 20 imputed datasets was conducted and aggregated to find out if the findings in the complete datasets are or are not the

result of listwise deletion. In general, the imputation analyses confirm the findings from the previous section.

First and foremost, the composite effect of presidentialization, running an executive candidate, and their interaction shows a similar pattern in imputation as in complete cases. Where running a candidate increases the chance of privatized leadership-centered communication from 21% to 35% in highly presidentialized systems, this increase drops to 27% to 31% for medium presidentialization, and for low presidentialization it is turned on its head (34% for not running to 27% for running) as in the complete case analysis, which leads me to the conclusion that the observations of the last section are robust in this regard: Leadership privatization is a strategy only employed when parties have a presentable candidate at hand and when the office at stake is important (=presidentialized) enough to invest considerable resources in this strategy. This interplay of election-level and party-specific predictors is also the most relevant in both separate imputation analyses of TV and newspaper advertising (and largely outweighs the nearly insignificant positive effect of the electoral system and the negative effect of populism in newspaper advertising framing, see Appendix, Table A.12).

The notion of leadership privatization being a costly strategy is also confirmed by the robust positive effect party professionalization has on privatization of leadership-featuring advertising content. As seen in the complete case analyses, parties with more resources at hand tend to more often use displays of leaders' traits as a campaign strategy in the content of their advertising. This effect is even stronger in the imputation analysis. The negative effect of presidentialization on advertising content is smaller than in the complete case analysis and does not show a credible interval greater than 90% or higher. Neither does the negative effect of ideological centrism visible in the separate analysis of privatized leadership content in newspaper advertising (see Appendix, Table A.10) influence the pooled analysis significantly.

The imputation analysis of privatization attributed to non-leaders in columns 3 and 4 of Table 8.2 also largely confirms the findings and non-findings of the respective complete case

analyses. The pooled multiple imputation analysis of privatized framing of non-leaders also shows no consistent associations of the tested variables with this campaign strategy. This pattern is also mirrored by both separate analyses of non-leadership privatization in TV and newspaper advertising's framing (see Appendix, Table A.12).

When looking for explanations for why parties privatize advertising content with non-leaders' traits, only the effect of incumbency is robust. The effect of the electoral system, mainly attributed to individual candidates' influence on newspaper advertising (which also cannot be traced any more in the separate newspaper analysis), does not provide a credible interval over 90% in the multiple imputation analyses. Other factors like centrism and populism having a significant positive influence on newspaper advertising privatization of non-leaders do not appear in the pooled analysis of Table 8.2, column 4. But incumbency, as stated before, is still influential after controlling for the influence of the listwise deletion.

8.4 Discussion

Leadership privatization is indeed not only a subset of general privatization, but even more a qualified subset of leadership individualization. Similar explanatory factors influence the presentation of party leaders as individuals as well as in private settings or concentrated on their traits. As with leadership individualization, the application of leadership privatization by parties seems to follow a rational calculation of expenses and expected revenue in attention and consequently votes. If parties have an executive candidate at hand and they expect this candidate to win in a highly presidentialized system and consequently a highly prized office, they tend to present this leading candidate more often to the voters in a privatized setting. And if the party running these candidates is also sufficiently professionalized, i.e. has monetary funds and professional staff at its disposal, the content of their advertising efforts can also be expected to show more privatization.

The picture is not as clear for non-leadership candidates though. Whereas no systematic explanation of non-leadership framing in campaign communication can be detected, the content of election advertisements only shows systematically higher levels of privatization related to non-leaders of incumbent parties. This does not come as too much of a surprise – after all, incumbent parties have a much greater reservoir of well-known candidates who they can present in privatized settings and reap benefits from their respective recognition values.

The absence or invisibility of other explanations for non-leadership privatization in the pooled analysis is mainly due to three factors. First, the production and therefore also the internal partisan planning of TV advertising is highly centralized. Non-leaders can seldom have an impact on the strategic use of privatization in this media outlet and even less hope to be the featured face or character. Second, even if party rank and file can influence the content of their party's advertising strategy, namely by independently running a less costly and less regulated newspaper advertisement, the framing of these ads is still mostly under the control of the party's strategy committee. Not only politically, but also from a marketing perspective, parties provide a corporate identity and oblige candidates who want to use this CI to also stick to a corporate design which seldom allows for privatized framing even of newspaper advertisements. Third, the group of non-leaders itself is very heterogeneous. It includes party soldiers from the backbenches as well as ministers or whips from the second row and well-funded individual candidates whose motivations for presenting privatized framing and content linked to their personae differ starkly. Clues for the pertinence of these three factors can be made out in the separate analysis of newspaper advertising's content. There the suitability of the electoral systems for personal vote earning, a factor clearly related to individual candidates competing not only against other parties, but also against their comrades on the same list, has a significant positive effect.

Relating these findings to the main drivers of personalization media suitability, contributing to a unique selling point, and its readiness to provide heuristics, we cannot reject either of them to

motivate party strategists to privatize electoral advertising. All these factors are motivating the use of leadership privatization by parties running executive candidates in presidentialized systems. Media attention is guaranteed to focus on frontrunner candidates, their characteristics can help in enhancing an ideologically centrist and therefore hardly distinguishable unique selling point, and the leading candidates can and do also work as heuristics to ease the decision making for or against a political force for less motivated, less informed, or cognitively less capable voters. In addition, the heuristic value and an enhancement of the unique selling point can also be achieved by privatizing non-leadership candidates' appearance when they face an electoral system conducive to cultivating a personal vote. However, these favorable conditions can be used best by parties equipped with the necessary resources (funds, staff, incumbents), supporting our notion that privatization, as personalization in general, is a campaign strategy chosen by rational actors for expected political gains.

So what does all this mean for the study of personalization as a campaign strategy? In the next chapter, I will summarize the findings of the thesis and derive their implications for the future study of personalization as a campaign strategy, as well as how personalization of campaign communication could affect the quality of democracy.

9. Conclusion

What have we learned about the personalization of campaign communication? First of all, the personalization of politics in general and the personalization of campaign advertising framing and content in particular is no monolithic phenomenon. And related to that, only the effects of specific groups of explanatory variables theorized to increase or decrease the proportion of personalization in campaign communication are found influential throughout the different facets of personalization.

As I have discussed in the previous chapters, personalization has to be theoretically as well as empirically differentiated on two dimensions. The mere mentioning or depicting of a candidate or other political personae labeled individualization shows different patterns than privatization, the more qualified featuring of politicians as private actors. And also different mechanisms are at work when parties choose to personalize the appearance of political personae in general, called general personalization, or party leaders, labelled leadership personalization. Although I theoretically expected independent influence on the occurrence of all subtypes of personalization as a campaign strategy by four distinct sets of factors, namely media suitability, the need for heuristics, centripetal or even cartelized party competition, and institutions, a much smaller subset emerged as especially powerful in explaining each subtype.

Analyzing the variance of mean personalization levels per party in various electoral arenas has also shown that the level of personalization cannot be attributed only to macro- or meso-level context factors. Not all parties react with personalization to a mediatized campaign environment or a presidentialized institutional setup. Each party's qualities on the lower level of analysis also have to be taken into account when explaining its use of personalization. The parties' position in the ideological competition, whether they run candidates for executive office, and their resources also determine the use of this specific strategy in election campaigns. And

especially the interplay between factors on both levels, here presidentialization and running an executive candidate, provided the most robust insight into patterns of personalization.

In this chapter, I will summarize the results of the analyses in the light of the four main drivers of personalization theorized above, namely modernization, institutions, party competition, and party resources, then discuss the impact of personalization on the quality of democracy, and present avenues for further research in technologically and socially ever faster changing societies.

9.1 Explaining Personalization as a Campaign Strategy

In this study, four subtypes of personalization (general individualization, leadership individualization, general privatization, leadership privatization) have been analyzed separately with distinct results, but there are also commonalities in explaining the occurrence of these types of personalization. General individualization, the most overarching type of personalization, is mainly advanced by parties competing in arenas where politics is perceived as complex by the voters. Here parties apparently use personalization to offer a heuristic information shortcut to the voters when they have to make the complex decision on whom to vote for. Candidates are presented as easily accessible commodity packages of political information, whose assessment and evaluation is a task the human mind is much better equipped to perform than analyzing complex political proposals less and less based on ideology. The second strongest factor explaining general individualization is an interaction effect of the macro-level with a party feature on the micro-level of analysis: Parties which run executive candidates in highly presidentialized systems individualize a larger proportion of their campaign communication, especially on TV. This can be counted as evidence for the rationality of party strategists. After an assessment of the institutional environment (presidentialization produces media attention on persons as well as centripetal ideological competition and it tenders a powerful office as the price) and their own resources (a candidate running for executive

office), party strategists make a rational decision to personalize their appeal in campaigns and reap the benefits offered by the favorable conditions. This interaction effect also quintessentially shows that one has to consider the interplay of the electoral arena's framework with the qualities of parties competing in it when looking for predictors of personalization. However, the evidence of partisan qualities on the lower level of analysis independently influencing levels of general individualization is not as systematically visible as the macro- and interaction effects. The multiple imputation analysis of general individualization on the one hand shows a small but significant positive influence of a party's ideological closeness to the center of the respective competition space on the occurrence of personalization in advertising framing. This is evidence for a strategic use of individualization aiming at adding to a party's unique selling point in a centripetal competition. Parties competing for the median voter are rather hard to distinguish ideologically from one another, so their strategy to appear as a real alternative (especially on TV) is more and more based on personae the closer they get to the center of party competition. On the other hand, multiple imputation analysis also uncovers a theoretically unexpected negative effect of populism on general individualization. All other predictors theoretically expected to influence general individualization did not show empirically robust links to it. So the big picture of general individualization confirms the complexity hypothesis as well as the interaction hypothesis of presidentialization with running an executive candidate, and partly the centrism hypothesis. Consequentially, heuristics and a rational cost-benefit analysis, complemented by the willingness to make a party's unique selling point more visible, are the main drivers for this form of personalization in the sample under investigation. These patterns are found across all countries and levels of government under investigation; only Spanish TV advertising shows a systematically higher proportion of general individualization not explained by the theorized predictors.

Leadership individualization, the subset of individualization defined as party frontrunners' mere appearance in campaign advertising, is nearly exclusively driven by the interaction of

presidentialization with running an executive candidate. No other predictors, be they contextual or partisan, have a comparably stable influence on the use of leadership individualization in framing or content of campaign communication. Only the complete case analysis shows complementary explanatory power of the complexity of the electoral arena perceived by the voters and the professionalization of the party apparatus. Featuring party leaders as an enhancement or replacement for programmatic appeal is not surprisingly structured mainly by the utility of this strategy offered by the institutional framework. Although heuristic complexity-reduction goals might also motivate parties as well as their ability to field a professional leadership individualized campaign, the institutional setup uniting media suitability arguments and prestructuring centripetal party competition is most influential in explaining leadership individualization. In addition, individualized content concentrated on leadership is more likely to occur on Spanish TV and in newspaper advertisements in general. Individualization featuring non-leaders shows nearly no explanatory empirical regularities. With the exception of parties' centrism increasing a party's propensity to individualize non-leadership advertising content, no other systematic influence can be made out in the analysis. So for leadership individualization, we can also confirm the interaction hypothesis of presidentialization with running an executive candidate. The complexity hypothesis only finds support in the leadership framing analysis of complete cases, as does the centrism hypothesis for non-leadership content.

While the analysis of general privatization in chapter 7 does not provide us with robustly interpretable explanatory patterns, leadership privatization analyzed in chapter 8 again can be mainly attributed to the presence of executive candidates in presidentialized systems for framing, combined with party professionalization producing an increase in leadership privatization of campaign content. These patterns also indicate a rather sober cost-benefit analysis underlying the choice for leadership privatization by parties. If there is an executive candidate available in a presidentialized system and the party has enough organizational and

financial resources at hand, it resorts to privatized content concentrated on leadership. Privatization of non-leaders, however, appears to be based on a more mixed logic of candidates increasing their own unique selling points in personalization-friendly electoral systems and making use of their incumbency advantage.

So we can conclude that, against the theoretical expectations formalized in the hypotheses of chapter 2, there is no overarching factor fostering all facets of personalization in a similar way. Therefore, we can only give tentative answers to the question of which hypotheses to reject and which to uphold.

After reviewing the empirical evidence for the different subgroups of personalization I can conclude that also this study, in accordance with its comparative predecessors (Kriesi, 2012; Karvonen, 2010), provides only mixed evidence for an overarching “personalization hypothesis” (Adam & Maier, 2010) based on modernist macro-arguments. Mediatization, theoretically an integral part of societal change brought forward by modernization theorists believed to increase the appeal and utility of personalization as a campaign strategy, shows no robust patterns of systematically influencing the personalization of election campaigns. Only in the complete case analysis of leadership privatization in newspaper advertisements can a significant influence be made out, which admittedly is in line with theoretical expectations of stronger mediatization influence on privatization concentrated on leadership than individualization or general personalization, but does not withstand the robustness check of multiple imputation analyses and therefore could also be attributed to undue bias of listwise deletion. Furthermore, even if one attributed the variance between countries captured by the control variables exclusively to their media systems, there are no indications that the parties competing in the liberal media system of Canada on average show more personalization than their counterparts in the democratic-corporatist systems of Germany and Switzerland or even the polarized-pluralist systems of France and Spain. Mediatization hypothesis 1 therefore has to be rejected on the grounds of the results obtained in this study. Complexity is the second

facet of modernization theorized to foster political personalization in general and campaign personalization in particular. Although the increasing complexity of societal processes attributed to modernization, as well as these processes' organization, of which politics and election campaigns are an integral part, has its role in predicting personalized campaign communication, it is not decisive for every subtype of personalization in the media outlets under investigation. We only find tentative evidence for complexity hypothesis 2 in the analyses of individualization, but not for privatization.

Advocates of the modernization and mediatization thesis might argue that the cross-sectional design of this study is a shortcoming when analyzing modernization effects, putting too high requirements on their detection and because a comparison of the different cases over time is not possible. This shortcoming, however, is alleviated by using disaggregated measurements for mediatization and complexity, the theoretically influential facets of macro-modernity, instead of approximating it by time. Measuring variance in mediatization and perceived complexity directly, instead of using time as an auxiliary variable, as has been done in most other studies, should produce effects theoretically more sound than time alone. And although it can be discussed if the measurement of mediatization employed here can't be replaced by another operationalization, the fact that we do not find any robust independent mediatization effects in any of the empirical analyses probably speaks more about the inaccuracy of the mediatization hypothesis than this study's design.

Unlike modernization, institutional arrangements turned out to be the class of variables most influential in explaining personalization in this study. This is in line with Rahat and Sheafer's (2007) insight that the adoption of electoral institutions conducive to personalization, like direct executive elections, primaries, debates, and open lists, temporally precede all other forms of personalization, namely in campaign and voter behavior. After naively reviewing the empirical evidence of this study one might add that they also theoretically precede and empirically supersede the other explanations for personalization. However, it is not the institutions per se

which affect every party to the same degree, but the parties' strategic positions in these institutions which yield the most explanatory benefit. Especially, but not only, the level of leadership personalization a party employs in its campaign, be it individualized or privatized, is most constantly positively influenced by the interaction effect of presidentialization (context) and running an executive candidate (partisan). Hypothesis 5.2 therefore finds the most support in the analysis of personalization presented here. Neither presidentialization alone nor running an executive candidate per se show systematic influence on personalization, therefore the unqualified presidentialization hypothesis 4 as well as the executive candidate hypothesis 5.1 have to be rejected.

The electoral system of a given electoral arena which also affects all parties to the same degree only sporadically influences the level of personalization employed by parties competing in those arenas, namely only when looking at the complete case analysis of non-leadership-related privatized content. The electoral system hypothesis 3 therefore can only be upheld for this facet of personalization. From examining this group of variables we can conclude that not the institutional arrangements per se influence levels of personalization. In addition, parties need favorable assets and a certain position in the respective competition to assess personalization as a worthwhile strategy to attract voters and consequently implement it. So what are these assets and strategic positions exactly?

As we have seen in the first sections of chapters 5 to 8, the amount of personalization in campaign advertising not only varies between electoral arenas, but also the different parties within a certain arena show considerable variation when it comes to the application of personalization as a campaign strategy. Whether a party is running an executive candidate or not, as seen above in conjunction with presidentialization, systematically influences the levels of personalization as theoretically expected. And also a party's position in the ideological space has an independent effect on whether personalization is chosen by party strategists to communicate their bid for votes. However, this factor's influence is more often than not

superimposed or absorbed by the presentation of an executive candidate. Here we have the empirical problem that three party qualities often coincide: Large parties (1), who tend to be in the center of ideological party competition (2), tend to field executive candidates (3) more often than small parties on the extremes. Yet in addition to the executive candidate effects, we see independent influence of ideological centrism on some aspects of campaign personalization. Centrist parties more often generally individualize their communication's framing, as we can see in the multiple imputation analysis, and also more readily individualize content presented by or related to non-leaders, as seen both in the complete cases and the multiple imputation analysis. Privatization, however, is not significantly associated with ideological centrism. These findings indicate that personalization is not systematically replacing policy and parties in political advertising, but rather complementing them. Individualization, which was defined as depicting or mentioning a political person as an actor or object in an advertisement, is indeed observably linked to political centrism, measured directly via a party's political position as well as indirectly by running an executive candidate, but by definition here is more of a packaging for other information than information per se. Privatization, however, was defined as depicting politicians as private people with family or pursuing a hobby, or presenting their traits instead of ideological or policy positions. This qualification makes it the subtype of personalization more likely to replace instead of complement genuine political information. But since we do not see an association of centrism with this type of personalization, we can conclude that personalization is rather used by party strategists to package political information more appealingly and thereby also define their unique selling point more clearly, but not as a replacement for ideology, party, and policy. The centrism hypothesis 6 therefore finds tentative support, but further research will be necessary to uncover the different chicken-and-egg problems surrounding the relationship between centrism, running an executive candidate, and party size.

Intriguingly, populism which routinely makes use of charismatic linkage in party competition does not show a systematically positive effect on personalization at all. Not even leadership personalization, which can be expected to increase considerably for parties featuring a strong leader figure as the embodiment of a movement or “the people” as is defining for populism, is systematically higher for populist parties than for non-populists. On the contrary, populism even shows a negative effect on general individualization when looking at the multiple imputation analysis. So although charismatic linkage (Kitschelt, 2000) and media complicity (Mazzoleni, 2008) should be the perfect breeding ground for a personalized campaign strategy, the populists in this sample do not personalize their campaign content or systematically frame their campaign advertising on TV and newspapers more than other parties. Most likely, the populist appeal relies more on earned space than the paid space under investigation here. In paid space populists can and probably want to uphold an image of being viable competitor parties in a double strategy of mobilizing outsiders of the political process as well as convincing insiders. So on grounds of the analyses presented above I reject the populism hypothesis 7. Populism does not systematically lead to more personalization as a campaign strategy in the paid space investigated here.

Finally, from a rationalist perspective, I also tested the influence of parties’ assets conducive to campaigning in a personalized way. Personalization is a costly strategy whose implementation crucially relies on well-planned communication and therefore requires professional assistance. Especially privatization, which can also backfire as irrelevant and hollow extravaganza when not orchestrated professionally, should theoretically be employed more systematically by parties, which can rely on a well-funded public relations department or consultancy. Empirically, however, professionalization effects are limited to advertisements featuring party leaders. Both leadership individualization and leadership privatization are systematically more likely to occur when a party’s organization is more professionalized, i.e. has more employees and more money, than the competitors’. This concentration on leadership does not come as a

surprise since leaders have a tighter grip on the allocation of parties' centralized resources. The campaign headquarters are under direct control of the party leadership, which has few incentives to share these resources with backbenchers and can also increase party unity via personalization concentrated on leadership personae (see section 2.5.1). For personalization concentrated on leadership, the professionalization hypothesis 8 can therefore be upheld. General personalization is not affected systematically by parties' professionalization levels. A second type of asset, incumbency, empirically only has a positive significant effect on non-leadership privatization. This empirical pattern can best be explained by numeric considerations: Incumbent parties can rely on the face recognition of a larger and more renowned pool of candidates. Not only can they use ministers' popularity and recognition value, but they also have a numerically larger pool of sitting members of parliament ready to invest their own popularity for the party's overall gain. Yet why its effect is only visible for privatization in this sample and not for individualization cannot be answered conclusively. The incumbency hypothesis 9 therefore cannot be generally upheld.

9.2 Campaign Personalization and Democracy

So what are the normative implications of the empirical results found in this study? Pundits and scholars alike often denounce personalization as a symptom for or cause of a decline in sophisticated political decision-making. Personalization is accused of diluting or unduly replacing public political deliberation based on policy or ideology and therefore harming the quality of public discourse about collective decision-making and consequently damaging democracy. However, as discussed in the introduction to this thesis, this judgment is premature. When looking at the empirical patterns, we see mostly neutral explanatory patterns like institutions at work, rather than factors which are necessarily linked to normative claims about personalization like populism. We even see more indications of personalization actually promoting a more equal and therefore democratic political discourse than harming it.

The most robust explanatory factor for personalization is the institutional environment. Since this framework for political competition (ideally, and for the cases under investigation also empirically) is the result of constitutional processes with the approval of a great majority of citizens, criticism of personalization which is a result of these constitutional architectures is misguided. But also the more normatively loaded explanatory factors covered here – complexity, mediatization, dysfunctional party competition, and populism – do not lend themselves to a negative evaluation of personalization.

First and foremost, personalization as individualization is systematically used as a campaign strategy in electoral contexts, in which voters report that they are overwhelmed with the complexity of politics. The more complex the political world appears to the average voter, the more parties put names and pictures in their advertisements and the more political persons appear as actors or objects of sentences used in these ads, regardless of the semantic content. In these contexts, a personalization strategy of party campaign planners cannot at all be dismissed as spoiling political information. On the contrary, personalization makes this kind of information better accessible for voters unwilling or unable to deeply engage with complex ideological or policy-related information by two mechanisms, which allow adequate decision-making in an economical way. First, by attaching the condensed political proposals brought forward in an election campaign to a person, the parties increase the salience of said information. Personalization therefore serves as “the spoonful of sugar that makes the medicine go down” and ensures that policy-relevant proposals are not crowded out by the overwhelming mass of other information a voter is facing in his or her daily life. Second, the personalized information also serves as a heuristic shortcut, much like party labels or ideologies, condensing political information to a format more easily processable, evaluable, and rememberable by the human mind. Via these mechanisms, the political deliberation process during a campaign is made even more democratic by not excluding cognitively more limited voters from it. And even if the point were to be made that privatization is the real spoiler of political discourse in complex

political situations, the empirical results show that privatization unlike individualization has no systematic connection to complexity. Therefore this study's results indicate that personalization is more of a remedy fostering functioning egalitarian democratic discourse than hindering egalitarian collective decision-making.

This notion is reinforced by the effects of party competition. Centrist parties, who can be expected but do not have to contribute to a cartelized competition of indistinguishable ideological positions, thereby limiting the choice of alternatives vital for democracy, are systematically using individualization but not privatization to enhance their appeal to voters. Unlike privatization, which is much more likely to provide "spectacle, image and theatre" (Mair, 2013: 83) and thereby replace ideological and political competition, individualization rather complements or amplifies this information. When looking at the policy content vs. traits in the quasi-sentences under investigation, about 50% of them in TV and newspaper advertising for all candidates as well as leadership (including the privatized ones) do contain policy content which is presented by or linked to political persons, not replaced by them. The empirical results of this study do not support the notion that personalization precludes political competition, but rather complements or amplifies it.

In addition, the role of mediatization and its alleged hunger for privatized sensationalist information burying political sophistication is not nearly as influential for parties' decisions for or against a personalized campaign strategy. In fact, we do not find an empirical connection between the mediatization of a political arena and the use of personalization as a campaign strategy. Parties do not seem to intentionally want to cater to the media's wish for personalization in their paid campaign communication under investigation here. They might adapt other channels of campaign communication to elicit coverage, for example press releases or pseudo-events, but in paid space, the level of mediatization or the type of media system does not systematically explain the level of personalization in campaign advertising. Thus, also condemning personalization in political advertising as contributing to a decline in political

media coverage appears as unfounded as the links to political cartelization or spoiling of valuable voter attention discussed above.

Finally, even the link of personalization with populism suspected of harming democracy cannot be upheld. This conclusion is based on two grounds. First, as theorized above, populism is not harmful for democracy *per se*. Although often empirically paired with renouncing representative democracy and proto-totalitarian tendencies, populism is merely a hull or a strategy to promote a wide range of ideologies, which do not always have to be based on antidemocratic exclusionary tendencies. The harm for democracy deduced from this is theoretically more often grounded in populism's host ideologies than in its contribution as a political strategy. But even if one accepted populism as harmful for democracy *per se*, for example based on its antipluralist notion of an *ex ante* *volonté générale*, this study did not find an independent reinforcing empirical link of populism with personalization, neither in general, nor when concentrated on leadership.

So to summarize the insights stated above, seeing personalization as inherently harmful for democracy is inappropriate. Neither does it show a robust empirical link to populism, nor does it automatically spoil or unduly displace political information. On the contrary, it can be useful to broaden the base of political deliberation by making the process more accessible to a larger audience. Raising the salience of political information as well as offering guidance in a complex and confusing information environment are qualities of personalization conducive to democracy, and empirically these explanatory patterns are more robust for individualization than for privatization.

9.3 The Road Ahead

The fact that many hypotheses this study set out to test found only tentative support or could not entirely be refuted shows that the comparative study of electoral campaign personalization is far from finished. This study provides a step beyond explaining personalization by macro-

variance over time or in the context of single-country or single-election studies by presenting a comparative account of explanatory influence of factors on the contextual as well as the party level. Although the analyses provided here have partly shown robust indications of what drives parties to adopt a personalization strategy in their election campaign communication, further research is in order. The diverse effects of institutions, competition patterns, modernization, and party qualities on different facets of personalization presented here can only be a starting point for further research expanding the scope of robust results beyond the national, regional, and European contexts deliberately chosen to cover a wide but manageable amount of institutional variation for this study.

The eclectic framework of this study paired with the relatively low number of cases did not allow all theoretically possible combinations of predictors to be covered. All the more remarkable are the findings derived from the analyses presented above, which by design have passed a very conservative test. Especially the scarcity or even absence of national or level-specific idiosyncrasies in most of the analyses underscores the overarching validity of the findings obtained here. Systematic influence of presidentialization paired with executive candidacies, complexity of the electoral context, the electoral systems' suitability for personal vote-earning attributes, ideological centrism, and party professionalization on different facets of personalization has been uncovered in this study, but needs further refinement and testing in other circumstances to gain in validity. The complex interplay of motivations for campaign planners to adopt a personalized campaign strategy, be it based on the notion of strengthening their appeal's unique selling point or offering a heuristic for voters facing the complex decision of whom to vote for, can only gain from analyzing more cases, especially when tracking changes in party strategies over time, which would also allow time-variant analyses that this study was not equipped to provide. Nevertheless, we now have a more robust base on which to evaluate and qualify the modernist expectations a large number of scholars share when thinking about political personalization.

However, the task of uncovering explanations for campaign personalization will not become easier. In the process of further decentralization of campaign activity (Zittel, 2015), fostered by the gaining popularity of primaries, open lists, and the ever growing role social media play in campaigning, the palette of possible explanations for campaign personalization is growing with every candidate, public relations advisor, or party leader facing the choice of whether to put a policy proposal or a sympathetic face (or both) in the next campaign ad. On the necessary path towards a more refined and overarching multilevel explanation of political personalization in election campaigns this study took a first step beyond the large body of literature based on macroscopic analyses and single-country or even single-election case studies.

Beyond a positivist analysis of drivers of personalization as a campaign strategy, this study also provided indications for the notion that democracy will not necessarily suffer from personalization in campaign communication. Even if personalization is a symptom of an ever growing atomization of the public sphere, a tool for populists not well-meaning towards representative democracy or a slippery slope towards apolitical beauty contests for political office, as some pessimistic pundits tend to claim, these developments are not the only effects of personalization. It can also draw the attention of less politically interested or cognitively capable voters towards politics and motivate a greater share of the electorate to actually engage with politics, thereby alleviating existing biases in participation and consequently representation. Furthermore, personalization does not replace the political content of campaign advertising, but rather complements or amplifies it. Parties still control the lion's share of campaign funds and as vessels for ideological bases of politics and as selection bodies for political personnel are very adaptive and robust and far from being replaced by shiny pictures of political celebrities. Voters still associate leaders first and foremost with their parties and not with their respective personal traits (Karvonen, 2010: 84).

Campaign personalization is a strategic choice made by rational individuals. Every time the incentives change, the calculation balancing out costs and benefits has to be adapted anew.

What and how strong these incentives have been in recent elections in Canada, France, Germany, Spain, and Switzerland has been analyzed above. How they will change is a relevant question to tackle for the future study of campaign communication.

Appendix: Separate Analyses of TV and Newspaper Advertising

Table A.1 Complete case analyses of general individualization separated by media outlets

	TV framing (1)	TV content (2)	Newspaper framing (3)	Newspaper content (4)
beta 0	-0.82 (1.18)	-1.62 (1.17)	-2.78** (0.92)	-1.82** (0.88)
mediatization	-0.08 (0.38)	0.44 (0.38)	1.69 (1.09)	1.58 (1.11)
complexity	1.06 (4.26)	1.84 (4.37)	19.45** (6.88)	17.44** (6.73)
elec. system	-0.08 (0.13)	-0.03 (0.12)	0.00 (0.14)	0.05 (0.15)
presidentialization	0.90 (1.05)	3.63** (1.08)9	-3.95** (0.99)	-2.39** (0.93)
presidentialization * executive candidate	0.71** (0.36)	0.60* (0.33)	-0.25 (0.82)	-0.55 (0.89)
executive candidate (d)	-1.06 (0.79)	-0.29 (0.71)	1.71 (1.32)	1.48 (1.34)
centrism	0.26** (0.12)	0.27** (0.12)	-0.07 (0.10)	-0.20* (0.11)
populism (d)	-0.78 (0.58)	-0.25 (0.61)	-0.68 (0.61)	-1.08* (0.63)
professionalization (voteshare)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)
incumbency (d)	0.05 (0.47)	-0.32 (0.48)	-0.77** (0.43)	-0.58 (0.43)
France (d)	-0.21 (1.22)	-3.87** (1.27)	-	-
Germany (d)	0.13 (0.99)	-1.15 (0.97)	4.26** (1.59)	3.16** (1.63)
Spain (d)	1.95 (2.03)	2.71 (2.05)	14.19** (3.47)	11.08** (3.22)
European (d)	0.30 (2.00)	4.36** (2.05)	-5.12** (1.81)	-2.27 (1.73)
Regional (d)	1.00 (0.76)	0.95 (0.74)	4.25** (1.56)	2.70* (1.55)
N	85	85	58	58

Notes: Mean posterior beta regression coefficients with logit link, standard deviations in parentheses, reference country is Canada for TV and Switzerland for Newspaper, reference level is national, * credible interval > 90%, ** credible interval > 95%

Table A.2 Multiple imputation analyses of general individualization separated by media outlets

	TV framing (5)	TV content (6)	Newspaper framing (7)	Newspaper content (8)
beta 0	-0.59 (0.93)	-1.03 (0.90)	-0.35 (0.78)	-0.61 (0.71)
mediatization	-0.16 (0.36)	0.20 (0.35)	-0.54 (0.55)	0.15 (0.60)
complexity	1.57 (3.22)	4.70 (3.55)	1.30 (3.64)	4.28 (3.81)
elec. system	-0.08 (0.11)	-0.05 (0.11)	0.20 (0.13)	0.16 (0.12)
presidentialization	0.54 (0.82)	2.12** (0.88)	-0.30 (0.58)	-0.46 (0.54)
presidentialization * executive candidate	0.63* (0.36)	0.53 (0.39)	-0.22 (0.49)	-0.40 (0.56)
executive candidate (d)	-0.91 (0.75)	-0.24 (0.76)	0.48 (0.72)	0.68 (0.86)
centrism	0.26** (0.10)	0.30** (0.11)	0.01 (0.08)	-0.15 (0.09)
populism (d)	-0.86* (0.50)	-0.95* (0.53)	-0.65 (0.51)	-1.07** (0.53)
professionalization	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.03)	0.00 (0.04)	0.01 (0.04)
incumbency (d)	-0.07 (0.43)	-0.30 (0.45)	-0.33 (0.36)	-0.23 (0.35)
France (d)	0.72 (1.31)	-1.78 (1.67)	-	-
Germany (d)	0.04 (0.90)	-0.70 (0.90)	1.05 (1.15)	1.36 (1.05)
Spain (d)	1.77 (1.69)	2.98* (1.78)	2.10 (1.75)	3.32** (1.68)
European (d)	-0.18 (1.49)	1.87 (1.57)	-0.16 (1.04)	-0.21 (0.98)
Regional (d)	0.86 (0.59)	0.15 (0.59)	-0.56 (0.72)	-0.29 (0.75)
N	127	127	127	127

Notes: Means of mean posterior beta regression coefficients with logit link, pooled standard deviations in parentheses, reference country is Canada for TV and Switzerland for Newspaper, reference level is national, * credible interval > 90%, ** credible interval > 95%

Table A.3 Complete case analyses of leadership individualization separated by media outlets

	TV framing (1)	TV content (2)	Newspaper framing (3)	Newspaper content (4)
beta 0	-1.00 (1.32)	-2.53** (1.23)	-2.57** (0.86)	-1.48 (0.91)
mediatization	0.09 (0.41)	0.44 (0.40)	1.41 (1.11)	1.36 (1.13)
complexity	0.59 (4.62)	0.49 (4.42)	15.52** (6.44)	12.88* (6.63)
elec. system	0.06 (0.13)	0.00 (0.12)	-0.20* (0.15)	-0.15 (0.15)
presidentialization	-0.12 (1.07)	2.57** (1.10)	-2.71** (0.94)	-1.10 (0.94)
presidentialization * executive candidate	0.98** (0.36)	0.62** (0.32)	-0.20 (0.86)	-0.31 (0.89)
executive candidate (d)	-1.23 (0.78)	-0.51 (0.73)	0.69 (1.29)	0.46 (1.29)
centrism	0.20* (0.12)	0.11 (0.12)	-0.23** (0.11)	-0.36** (0.11)
populism (d)	-0.33 (0.61)	0.80 (0.66)	-0.41 (0.63)	-0.77 (0.61)
professionalization (voteshare)	0.01 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.03* (0.02)	0.03* (0.02)
incumbency (d)	0.14 (0.48)	-0.36 (0.47)	-0.82* (0.45)	-0.66 (0.44)
France (d)	-0.24 (1.26)	-3.14** (1.26)	-	-
Germany (d)	0.56 (1.06)	0.24 (1.02)	2.14 (1.64)	0.68 (1.57)
Spain (d)	1.69 (2.27)	2.65 (2.10)	11.15** (3.06)	7.54** (3.16)
European (d)	-0.55 (2.05)	3.54* (2.11)	-3.13* (1.79)	-0.06 (1.74)
Regional (d)	0.27 (0.77)	1.00 (0.76)	4.21** (1.53)	2.86* (1.62)
N	85	85	58	58

Notes: Mean posterior beta regression coefficients with logit link, standard deviations in parentheses, reference country is Canada for TV and Switzerland for Newspaper, reference level is national, * credible interval > 90%, ** credible interval > 95%

Table A.4 Multiple imputation analyses of leadership individualization separated by media outlets

	TV framing (5)	TV content (6)	Newspaper framing (7)	Newspaper content (8)
beta 0	-0.94 (0.92)	-1.91** (0.92)	-1.07 (0.68)	-0.64 (0.58)
mediatization	-0.03 (0.37)	0.11 (0.35)	-0.44 (0.59)	0.07 (0.46)
complexity	-1.43 (2.77)	0.32 (3.09)	1.59 (3.32)	2.58 (2.93)
elec. system	0.04 (0.11)	-0.02 (0.11)	0.00 (0.13)	-0.04 (0.12)
presidentialization	0.19 (0.73)	1.79*** (0.79)	-0.62 (0.59)	-0.35 (0.49)
presidentialization * executive candidate	0.79** (0.36)	0.41 (0.39)	0.12 (0.53)	0.06 (0.48)
executive candidate (d)	-0.69 (0.76)	0.39 (0.81)	0.09 (0.81)	0.09 (0.74)
centrism	0.18* (0.10)	0.13 (0.10)	-0.12 (0.09)	-0.31** (0.09)
populism (d)	-0.26 (0.50)	0.14 (0.52)	-0.52 (0.49)	-0.97** (0.48)
professionalization	-0.01 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.03)	0.07* (0.04)	0.05 (0.04)
incumbency (d)	0.17 (0.42)	-0.03 (0.43)	-0.50 (0.36)	-0.46 (0.36)
France (d)	0.15 (1.33)	-1.83 (1.55)	-	-
Germany (d)	0.12 (0.83)	-0.17 (0.86)	1.34 (1.11)	0.67 (1.13)
Spain (d)	0.72 (1.55)	1.72 (1.64)	3.04** (1.53)	2.84** (1.30)
European (d)	-0.01 (1.23)	2.05 (1.41)	-0.77 (1.06)	0.03 (1.12)
Regional (d)	0.52 (0.52)	0.51 (0.57)	0.14 (0.68)	0.35 (0.49)
N	127	127	127	127

Notes: Means of mean posterior beta regression coefficients with logit link, pooled standard deviations in parentheses, reference country is Canada for TV and Switzerland for Newspaper, reference level is national, * credible interval > 90%, ** credible interval > 95%

Table A.5 Complete case analyses of non-leadership individualization separated by media outlets

	TV framing (1)	TV content (2)	Newspaper framing (3)	Newspaper content (4)
beta 0	-0.50 (1.20)	-0.70 (1.04)	-3.22** (0.82)	-3.12** (0.84)
mediatization	-0.03 (0.39)	0.03 (0.36)	0.55 (0.98)	0.43 (1.02)
complexity	-0.17 (4.42)	-0.04 (3.90)	3.11 (5.81)	3.25 (6.24)
elec. system	-0.11 (0.12)	0.00 (0.11)	0.59** (0.15)	0.52** (0.14)
presidentialization	1.01 (1.04)	0.50 (0.90)	-1.01 (0.88)	-1.24 (0.87)
presidentialization * executive candidate	-0.33 (0.34)	-0.11 (0.32)	0.63 (0.70)	0.31 (0.68)
executive candidate (d)	0.24 (0.74)	-0.06 (0.69)	0.05 (1.01)	-0.13 (1.00)
centrism	-0.03 (0.11)	0.12 (0.11)	0.42** (0.10)	0.34** (0.10)
populism (d)	-0.55 (0.59)	-0.79 (0.64)	0.76 (0.53)	0.70 (0.55)
professionalization (voteshare)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.04** (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)
incumbency (d)	-0.12 (0.45)	-0.14 (0.41)	1.32** (0.36)	1.15** (0.37)
France (d)	-0.25 (1.23)	0.26 (1.14)	-	-
Germany (d)	-1.20 (1.03)	-1.24 (0.93)	1.24 (1.35)	2.23 (1.40)
Spain (d)	-0.73 (2.12)	-0.64 (1.88)	2.45 (2.59)	3.18 (2.75)
European (d)	1.20 (2.02)	0.43 (1.74)	-0.89 (1.66)	-1.48 (1.63)
Regional (d)	0.60 (0.75)	0.08 (0.65)	-1.19 (1.42)	-1.02 (1.45)
N	85	85	58	58

Notes: Mean posterior beta regression coefficients with logit link, standard deviations in parentheses, reference country is Canada for TV and Switzerland for Newspaper, reference level is national, * credible interval > 90%, ** credible interval > 95%

Table A.6 Multiple imputation analyses of non-leadership individualization separated by media outlets

	TV framing (5)	TV content (6)	Newspaper framing (7)	Newspaper content (8)
beta 0	-0.61 (0.90)	-0.71 (0.86)	-2.11** (0.68)	-2.55** (0.59)
mediatization	-0.01 (0.34)	0.11 (0.32)	0.42 (0.40)	0.44 (0.39)
complexity	2.88 (3.20)	2.41 (3.18)	2.67 (2.41)	3.28 (2.34)
elec. system	-0.10 (0.11)	0.00 (0.10)	0.30** (0.12)	0.29** (0.11)
presidentialization	0.31 (0.80)	0.00 (0.79)	0.00 (0.44)	-0.36 (0.42)
presidentialization *	-0.10	0.03	-0.15	-0.20
executive candidate	(0.34)	(0.33)	(0.43)	(0.43)
executive candidate (d)	-0.32 (0.68)	-0.62 (0.66)	-0.25 (0.73)	-0.15 (0.67)
centrism	0.04 (0.10)	0.13 (0.10)	0.17** (0.08)	0.16** (0.08)
populism (d)	-0.69 (0.49)	-0.82 (0.53)	0.28 (0.43)	0.28 (0.42)
professionalization	0.00 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.04)	0.00 (0.04)
incumbency (d)	-0.25 (0.40)	-0.31 (0.39)	0.56* (0.33)	0.55 (0.34)
France (d)	0.22 (1.34)	0.43 (1.26)	-	-
Germany (d)	-0.61 (0.91)	-0.60 (0.85)	-0.03 (1.06)	0.89 (0.97)
Spain (d)	0.50 (1.69)	0.43 (1.62)	0.86 (1.26)	1.72 (1.14)
European (d)	0.01 (1.45)	-0.31 (1.46)	0.55 (0.96)	-0.17 (0.84)
Regional (d)	0.23 (0.57)	-0.20 (0.54)	-0.20 (0.40)	-0.34 (0.38)
N	127	127	127	127

Notes: Means of mean posterior beta regression coefficients with logit link, pooled standard deviations in parentheses, reference country is Canada for TV and Switzerland for Newspaper, reference level is national, * credible interval > 90%, ** credible interval > 95%

Table A.7 Complete case analyses of general privatization separated by media outlets

	TV framing (1)	TV content (2)	Newspaper framing (3)	Newspaper content (4)
beta 0	1.09 (1.36)	-1.11 (1.19)	-0.27 (0.89)	-1.00 (0.63)
mediatization	-0.06 (0.41)	0.17 (0.34)	-1.04 (1.04)	0.39 (0.82)
complexity	-1.77 (4.47)	-0.47 (3.82)	-12.47* (6.61)	6.11 (5.28)
elec. system	0.12 (0.13)	0.05 (0.12)	0.10 (0.13)	-0.06 (0.11)
presidentialization	-1.45 (1.20)	-0.81 (0.92)	0.94 (0.88)	-1.33* (0.68)
presidentialization * executive candidate	0.41 (0.35)	0.09 (0.30)	2.36** (0.78)	0.00 (0.73)
executive candidate (d)	-0.16 (0.77)	-0.19 (0.78)	-5.02** (1.27)	2.37** (1.03)
centrism	-0.06 (0.12)	-0.05 (0.11)	-0.07 (0.10)	0.14* (0.08)
populism (d)	-0.26 (0.63)	0.66 (0.64)	0.21 (0.55)	0.02 (0.42)
professionalization (voteshare)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.01)
incumbency (d)	-0.38 (0.49)	-0.23 (0.43)	0.33 (0.39)	0.06 (0.31)
France (d)	0.21 (1.27)	1.27 (1.05)	-	-
Germany (d)	0.01 (1.03)	1.08 (0.92)	-2.38 (1.43)	0.23 (1.13)
Spain (d)	-1.34 (2.17)	-1.44 (1.91)	-5.93* (3.10)	-1.90 (2.32)
European (d)	-1.16 (2.30)	-0.87 (1.79)	5.38** (1.73)	-2.47* (1.28)
Regional (d)	-0.96 (0.88)	0.13 (0.71)	-0.50 (1.45)	-0.88 (1.11)
N	85	85	58	58

Notes: Mean posterior beta regression coefficients with logit link, standard deviations in parentheses, reference country is Canada for TV and Switzerland for Newspaper, reference level is national, * credible interval > 90%, ** credible interval > 95%

Table A.8 Multiple imputation analyses of general privatization separated by media outlets

	TV framing (5)	TV content (6)	Newspaper framing (7)	Newspaper content (8)
beta 0	0.19 (0.96)	-1.39 (0.93)	-1.27* (0.67)	-1.22 (0.81)
mediatization	0.09 (0.37)	0.11 (0.34)	-0.11 (0.58)	0.63 (0.54)
complexity	-1.29 (3.19)	-5.00 (3.69)	-3.51 (3.32)	3.83 (3.36)
elec. system	0.12 (0.12)	0.03 (0.11)	0.01 (0.09)	0.05 (0.11)
presidentialization	-0.72 (0.88)	0.53 (1.03)	-0.42 (0.56)	-1.11* (0.56)
presidentialization * executive candidate	0.50 (0.39)	-0.18 (0.35)	1.27** (0.54)	0.13 (0.43)
executive candidate (d)	-0.84 (0.80)	0.46 (0.73)	-2.58** (0.92)	0.80 (0.67)
centrism	0.05 (0.10)	-0.04 (0.10)	-0.05 (0.08)	0.07 (0.08)
populism (d)	0.12 (0.51)	0.53 (0.54)	-0.05 (0.45)	0.25 (0.46)
professionalization	0.02 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.03)	0.03 (0.04)	0.01 (0.04)
incumbency (d)	-0.46 (0.43)	-0.19 (0.43)	0.06 (0.32)	-0.06 (0.34)
France (d)	-0.29 (1.44)	1.24 (1.46)	-	-
Germany (d)	0.53 (0.85)	0.35 (1.01)	-0.15 (1.08)	0.32 (1.04)
Spain (d)	-0.20 (1.63)	-3.04* (1.78)	-0.41 (1.67)	-0.63 (1.72)
European (d)	0.05 (1.61)	1.70 (1.98)	1.64 (1.17)	-1.45 (1.04)
Regional (d)	-0.48 (0.64)	0.97 (0.74)	0.74 (0.72)	-0.16 (0.73)
N	127	127	127	127

Notes: Means of mean posterior beta regression coefficients with logit link, pooled standard deviations in parentheses, reference country is Canada for TV and Switzerland for Newspaper, reference level is national, * credible interval > 90%, ** credible interval > 95%

Table A.9 Complete case analyses of leadership privatization separated by media outlets

	TV framing (1)	TV content (2)	Newspaper framing (3)	Newspaper content (4)
beta 0	-0.02 (1.20)	-2.48** (1.02)	-2.60** (0.93)	-2.93** (0.77)
mediatization	0.07 (0.40)	-0.08 (0.32)	-0.62 (0.86)	1.65* (1.03)
complexity	-0.78 (4.75)	-2.96 (3.52)	-8.45* (5.46)	12.41** (5.65)
elec. system	0.17 (0.13)	-0.04 (0.10)	-0.03 (0.12)	-0.01 (0.14)
presidentialization	-1.07 (1.16)	0.02 (0.90)	-0.50 (0.77)	-1.14 (0.92)
presidentialization * executive candidate	0.84** (0.35)	0.32 (0.28)	2.90** (0.77)	-0.37 (0.74)
executive candidate (d)	-1.32* (0.78)	-0.19 (0.67)	-4.97** (1.16)	0.52 (1.07)
centrism	0.07 (0.12)	0.04 (0.10)	-0.01 (0.09)	-0.25** (0.10)
populism (d)	-1.06* (0.61)	0.42 (0.55)	1.21** (0.54)	-0.13 (0.53)
professionalization (voteshare)	0.01 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.04** (0.02)
incumbency (d)	-0.55 (0.48)	-0.39 (0.38)	0.34 (0.37)	-0.60 (0.41)
France (d)	0.03 (1.35)	-0.07 (1.03)	-	-
Germany (d)	0.14 (1.08)	-0.01 (0.85)	-0.71 (1.26)	-0.01 (1.44)
Spain (d)	-0.29 (2.20)	-1.92 (1.70)	-2.52 (2.61)	3.54 (2.37)
European (d)	-1.10 (2.25)	0.51 (1.68)	3.91** (1.44)	-0.17 (1.70)
Regional (d)	-0.62 (0.77)	0.79 (0.63)	0.24 (1.27)	2.87** (1.34)
N	85	85	58	58

Notes: Mean posterior beta regression coefficients with logit link, standard deviations in parentheses, reference country is Canada for TV and Switzerland for Newspaper, reference level is national, * credible interval > 90%, ** credible interval > 95%

Table A.10 Multiple imputation analyses of leadership privatization separated by media outlets

	TV framing (5)	TV content (6)	Newspaper framing (7)	Newspaper content (8)
beta 0	-0.07 (0.91)	-2.80** (0.79)	-2.43** (0.62)	-2.29** (0.65)
mediatization	-0.02 (0.34)	-0.03 (0.27)	0.04 (0.53)	0.17 (0.42)
complexity	-3.49 (3.15)	-3.20 (2.88)	-3.80 (3.18)	2.65 (2.49)
elec. system	0.17 (0.11)	-0.04 (0.09)	-0.05 (0.08)	0.08 (0.12)
presidentialization	-0.40 (0.80)	0.41 (0.76)	-1.33 (0.49)	-0.38 (0.47)
presidentialization * executive candidate	0.59* (0.33)	0.24 (0.27)	1.62 (0.43)	0.07 (0.41)
executive candidate (d)	-0.80 (0.69)	0.32 (0.57)	-2.93 (0.73)	0.09 (0.68)
centrism	0.09 (0.10)	0.08 (0.08)	-0.02 (0.07)	-0.19** (0.08)
populism (d)	-0.75 (0.49)	0.07 (0.45)	0.39 (0.41)	-0.26 (0.42)
professionalization	-0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	0.00 (0.03)	0.05 (0.04)
incumbency (d)	-0.39 (0.42)	-0.39 (0.36)	0.04 (0.29)	-0.32 (0.31)
France (d)	0.05 (1.31)	-0.42 (1.08)	-	-
Germany (d)	-0.45 (0.85)	0.01 (0.76)	0.86 (0.80)	0.47 (1.07)
Spain (d)	-1.43 (1.66)	-1.61 (1.43)	0.74 (1.45)	0.51 (1.32)
European (d)	0.05 (1.37)	1.00 (1.40)	0.83 (0.81)	-0.28 (0.99)
Regional (d)	-0.30 (0.53)	0.87* (0.52)	1.23 (0.74)	0.26 (0.49)
N	127	127	127	127

Notes: Means of mean posterior beta regression coefficients with logit link, pooled standard deviations in parentheses, reference country is Canada for TV and Switzerland for Newspaper, reference level is national, * credible interval > 90%, ** credible interval > 95%

Table A.11 Complete case analyses of non-leadership privatization separated by media outlets

	TV framing (1)	TV content (2)	Newspaper framing (3)	Newspaper content (4)
beta 0	-0.18 (1.24)	-0.76 (1.01)	-1.04 (0.80)	-1.85** (0.82)
mediatization	-0.06 (0.40)	-0.14 (0.31)	-0.62 (0.98)	-0.77 (0.95)
complexity	-1.81 (4.43)	-5.33 (3.36)	-4.65 (5.71)	-5.56 (6.27)
elec. system	-0.05 (0.13)	0.01 (0.10)	0.10 (0.13)	0.11 (0.11)
presidentialization	-0.11 (1.06)	-0.16 (0.85)	1.03 (0.87)	0.12 (0.72)
presidentialization * executive candidate	-0.32 (0.36)	-0.14 (0.28)	0.23 (0.73)	0.15 (0.76)
executive candidate (d)	0.90 (0.79)	-0.69 (0.63)	-0.86 (1.19)	1.09 (1.12)
centrism	-0.15 (0.12)	-0.30** (0.10)	-0.06 (0.10)	0.41** (0.10)
populism (d)	0.69 (0.64)	-0.18 (0.53)	-0.46 (0.54)	1.73** (0.53)
professionalization (voteshare)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	-0.05** (0.02)
incumbency (d)	0.05 (0.47)	0.14 (0.44)	0.09 (0.38)	1.35** (0.37)
France (d)	0.15 (1.22)	1.01 (0.96)	-	-
Germany (d)	-0.47 (1.01)	-0.23 (0.79)	-1.32 (1.52)	-0.64 (1.30)
Spain (d)	-1.37 (2.12)	-4.05** (1.66)	-3.13 (2.62)	-3.96 (2.82)
European (d)	0.73 (2.06)	0.19 (1.66)	1.74 (1.73)	-1.45 (1.44)
Regional (d)	-0.06 (0.78)	0.03 (0.64)	-0.84 (1.32)	-2.62* (1.39)
N	85	85	58	58

Notes: Mean posterior beta regression coefficients with logit link, standard deviations in parentheses, reference country is Canada for TV and Switzerland for Newspaper, reference level is national, * credible interval > 90%, ** credible interval > 95%

Table A.12 Multiple imputation analyses of non-leadership privatization separated by media outlets

	TV framing (5)	TV content (6)	Newspaper framing (7)	Newspaper content (8)
beta 0	-0.44 (1.02)	-1.10 (0.84)	-1.81** (0.61)	-1.60** (0.68)
mediatization	0.04 (0.35)	-0.11 (0.32)	0.12 (0.46)	0.47 (0.45)
complexity	1.79 (2.92)	-6.03 (4.00)	0.77 (2.66)	0.42 (2.89)
elec. system	-0.03 (0.11)	-0.01 (0.10)	0.03 (0.09)	0.10 (0.09)
presidentialization	-0.62 (0.72)	0.57 (1.19)	0.37 (0.48)	-0.06 (0.49)
presidentialization *	-0.10 (0.35)	-0.31 (0.34)	0.03 (0.48)	-0.36 (0.37)
executive candidate	0.23 (0.73)	-0.06 (0.70)	-0.36 (0.79)	0.34 (0.63)
centrism	-0.08 (0.10)	-0.26** (0.10)	-0.04 (0.07)	0.23** (0.08)
populism (d)	0.79 (0.52)	0.06 (0.58)	-0.32 (0.39)	1.04** (0.48)
professionalization	0.01 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.04)
incumbency (d)	-0.16 (0.43)	0.20 (0.42)	-0.03 (0.30)	0.52* (0.31)
France (d)	-0.44 (2.58)	0.85 (1.47)	-	-
Germany (d)	0.40 (0.88)	-0.52 (0.96)	-0.75 (1.07)	-0.56 (0.90)
Spain (d)	0.51 (1.58)	-3.85** (1.80)	-0.19 (1.38)	-1.02 (1.45)
European (d)	-0.30 (1.25)	1.56 (2.25)	0.83 (1.05)	-0.18 (0.94)
Regional (d)	-0.37 (0.55)	0.59 (0.83)	0.25 (0.50)	-0.22 (0.64)
N	127	127	127	127

Notes: Means of mean posterior beta regression coefficients with logit link, pooled standard deviations in parentheses, reference country is Canada for TV and Switzerland for Newspaper, reference level is national, * credible interval > 90%, ** credible interval > 95%

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